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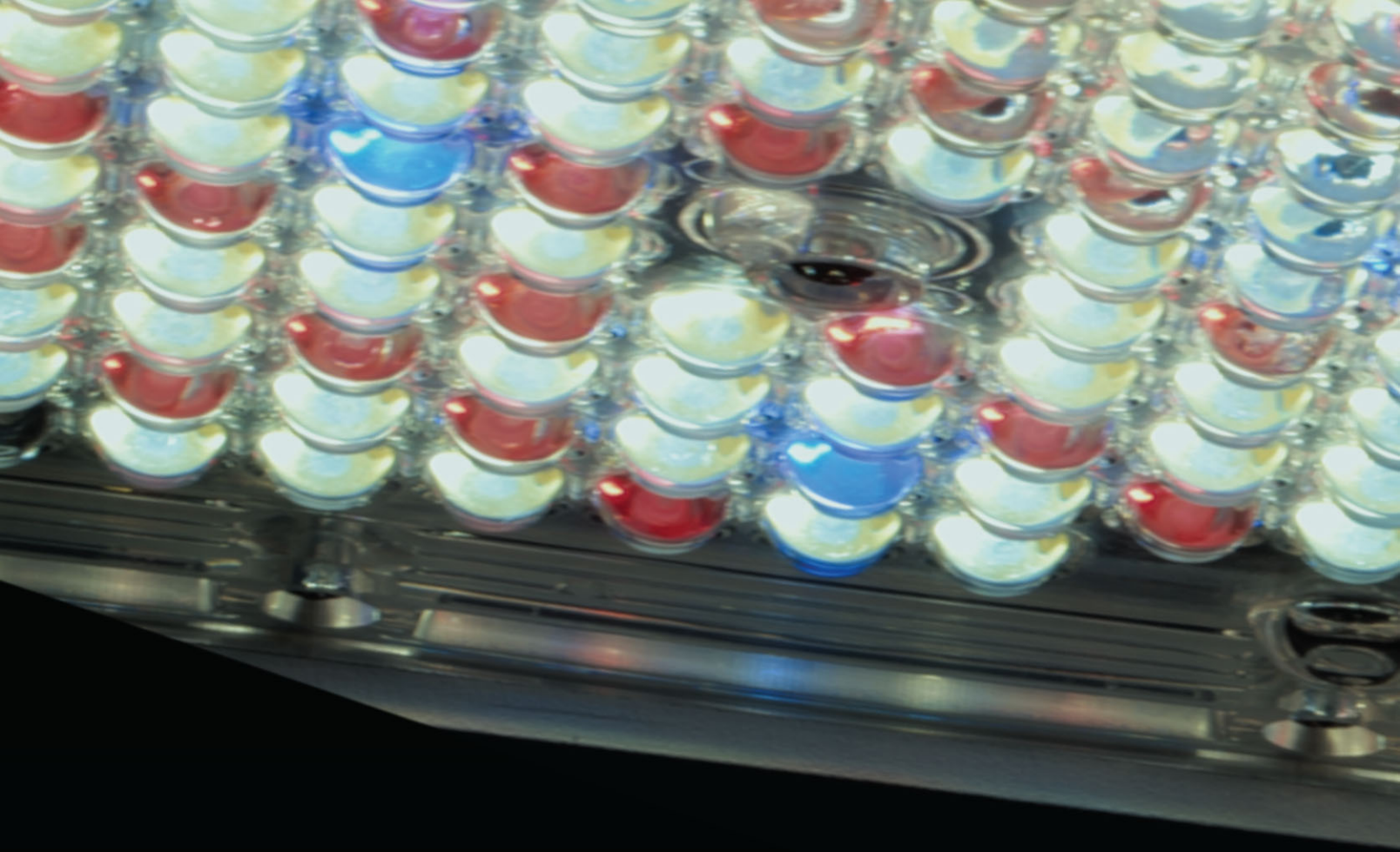
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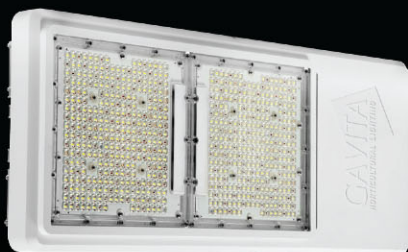




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issue 42

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The incredible cannabis yields that Mike Howard at Nevada's The Grove has been achieving are no fluke. Like many other professional cannabis growers that have switched over to Fohse lighting fixtures, Howard is seeing record harvests and mind-blowing results. Take a look at these numbers from one of The Grove's most recent harvests comparing the results of Fohse's A3i fixtures to standard HPS fixtures:

The A3i system generated an average of **27 percent more light** as compared to the HPS fixtures at The Grove. This additional light led to an increase in dry yield harvest weights by a whopping **65 percent!** All of this, while using 16 percent less energy than the HPS lighting it was compared to. Mike knew that making the switch over to Fohse fixtures would be the solution to achieving exceptional harvests at The Grove; he had seen them perform magic at other grow operations firsthand.

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By observing the remarkable harvests that Kevin Kuethe at Lume Cannabis achieved as well as the unbelievable yields that Steve Cantwell at Green Life Productions has obtained since both utilizing Fohse's workhorse grow light, the A3i, proved without a doubt to Howard, that Fohse lighting is made specifically to grow cannabis, and yielded more weight with less fixtures.

The Grove continues to strive for the highest quality in everything they do, so it only made sense for them that they would continue onward with Fohse products - the best lighting fixtures in the business - to match their excellence.



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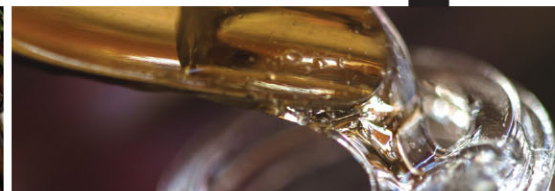
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Photo: Marvin Lee Stohs

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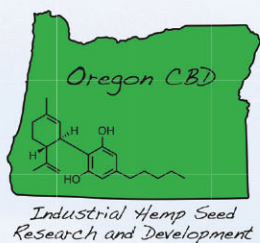


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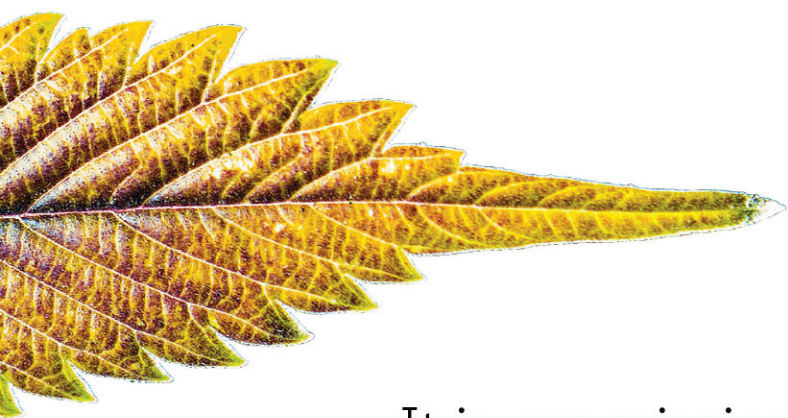
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

LAST WEEK I FOUND MYSELF in New York City taking a series of canna-centric meetings. First up, I sat down with the new CEO of a former west coast-based investment company. We talked shop in their new Times Square office, a cross-country move symbolic of cannabis' shifting presence. Later that evening, just north of the city, I shared celebratory cocktails with an exclusive gathering of investors, executives and industry players. And the next day, after more meetings, I was finally able to close out my 48 hour visit touring a new immersive weed experience on Sixth Avenue.

Dashing into the 4:20 a.m. ride-share for my flight headed back west, I asked myself, "Is this what the new normal feels like?" The energy and focus on the flower seem stronger than ever in the Big Apple. For years, these marathon business trips were the norm for cannabis executives; however, more often than not, the action was almost entirely on the west coast. I must say, it was exciting to observe the Green Rush's arrival in the east. I could feel the change in the air.

Many in today's industry preach the need to normalize cannabis in order to move into a new post-prohibition era. But, what's normal?

Over the years, I've learned that normalization — that is, the de-stigmatization of cannabis — is only advanced by those labeled as the doers, the activists, the movers and the shakers. These motivated groups are the ones planting new genetics, starting new businesses and pushing the limits of art and culture. Some of them are new to cannabis, and some bring a lifelong relationship with the plant. What these cannapreneurs have in common is a shared belief in the power of cannabis and its ability to change the world we live in for the better.

Jim Belushi, a relative newcomer to the cannabis space, is reaching a mainstream audience thanks to his long, successful career in Hollywood. Now, with the second season of his Discovery Network docu-series, "Growing Belushi," which gives viewers an inside look at his cannabis farming venture, he's introducing a large audience to the world of legalized weed.

Art is also driving the new normal. Look at the amazing work created by both photographer Marvin Lee Stohs and artist Savina Monet — two Pacific Northwest creatives who are at the top of their game, exploring new ways to communicate the beauty and relevance of pot. Stohs takes a maverick approach to capturing unseen aspects of cannabis through a microscope, while Monet creates activist-inspired collages of weed, often juxtaposing the plant with Technicolor images of influential change-makers.

For many years the industry has understood the special relationship and similarities between cannabis and psychedelics. Now more than ever, the masses are starting to micro-dose with magic mushrooms alongside cannabis. Madison Margolin, the co-founder of DoubleBlind (one of my favorite non-cannabis magazines), relays to our readers the importance of psilocybin's healing power.

Regardless of what your normal is, we're all entering a future more focused on a holistic approach to health. It's a mindset and way of living that dictates how we think, recreate and interact with the earth and our fellow man. I so look forward to watching cannabis and other powerful plants play a significant role in building this healthier road ahead. And I'm thrilled to have a front row seat to witness these passionate people create the change that's coming. Can you feel it, too? 🌿

Eugenio Garcia
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ONE OF THE EASIEST WAYS TO CONNECT with friends, family and other cannabis aficionados during the pandemic has been meeting online. Whether that's via Zoom or Instagram Live, there are certainly no shortages in that department. As social media continues to evolve and the metaverse looms on the horizon, there will always be something particularly striking about a classic **#potporn** photo.

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From the Web *CannabisNow.com*

VA STILL PUNISHES VETERANS FOR USING MEDICAL CANNABIS *By Bill Weinberg*

Military veterans continue to be denied much-needed treatment by the VA because of their cannabis use, even in states that have legalized.

Read: cannabisnow.com/va

THE STORY OF CANNABIS IN FIVE ESSENTIAL STRAINS *By Zack Ruskin*

From the early days of landrace strains to modern marvels, this quintet of strains provides an enlightening survey of cannabis history.

Read: cannabisnow.com/story

L.A. COUNTY TO DISMISS NEARLY 60,000 PAST CANNABIS CONVICTIONS *By A.J. Herrington*

The expungements are supposed to help address the negative impact of cannabis prohibition, which has been disproportionately borne by communities of color.

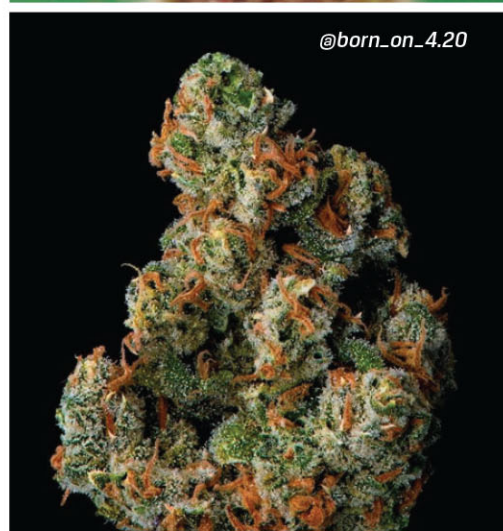
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A close-up photograph of a hand holding a single mushroom with a thick, textured, brown cap and a light-colored, fibrous stem. The background is a soft-focus field of numerous other mushrooms, creating a sense of depth and abundance. The lighting is warm and natural, highlighting the textures of the mushrooms and the skin of the hand.

Weed Plus:

The Healing Mystique of Magic Mushrooms

*Much like cannabis, psilocybin brings on an experience which
researchers are connecting to their reparative powers.*

BY MADISON MARGOLIN | PHOTOS CANNA OBSCURA

THE WINTER SUN was beating down through the open windows of my older sister's Porsche as we cruised down Pico Boulevard toward the beach, bumper to bumper with other cars in the westward traffic of a warm Sunday afternoon in Los Angeles.

"That smells good," she hollered to the guys in the next car over, pot smoke filling the space between lanes. They motioned to pass a joint through the open windows, my two best pals and I giggling in the back seat. I was 18 and by this point familiar with the terrain of a cannabis high, but I wanted to keep my head clear for later — for what my sister described as "weed plus."

I'd spent my first semester of college smoking weed out of a hookah with friends, my nights ablaze, as one does in Berkeley. In the daytime, I'd burrow into a pile of books about psychedelic counterculture for an upcoming research paper. I had become obsessed with Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception*, and as if I'd read the guidebook to Paris before a trip, I decided that all my academic probing into psychedelics better culminate in lived experience. So, I bought a half ounce of shrooms and headed to Venice Beach with a few friends for our first time "tripping." My older sister — a dedicated stoner and a cannabis attorney 14 years my senior — along with a family friend, who was a medical marijuana doctor and a seasoned psychonaut, were there to guide us in case things got too weird.

Unlike acid (which I still hadn't tried at that point), mushrooms felt like the next level up from cannabis — that is, "weed plus" in the words of my sister. The psychedelic experience, or "trip," would be longer than a regular weed high, but shorter than 12 hours of LSD.

After that first time tripping, I soon learned that, for me, mushrooms and cannabis bring on similar visuals of swirling floral patterns and paisleys in a pink Technicolor palette.

My first time taking mushrooms was easily one of the best, most significant days of my life: playful, exploratory, spiritual. I felt like I was reborn, discovering the world and its wonders for the first time. The shrooms had turned down the volume on the anxiety that defined my day-to-day and turned up the volume on my appreciation for life. For the first time, the phrase "be here now" meant something to me on an embodied level — but like Ram Dass, who ventured to India after coming up and down on countless psychedelic trips during his tenure as a psychiatry professor at Harvard in the 1960s, I too wondered why it seemed I needed mushrooms to feel the way I did. I asked myself, "Would I be able to get there on my own one day?"

PSYCH 101

It's a common adage that one can accomplish the same degree of healing in a single psychedelic trip that might otherwise require years of therapy. By the same token, in the psychedelic community it's often said that "the journey is the medicine." In other words, such as in the case of mushrooms, it's not just the psilocybin, the main psychoactive compound, that spurs a neurological reset — it's the experience of the trip itself. This can come with insights, challenges and joys that consequently foster lessons and memories that nourish the soul and last a lifetime. Science can only attempt to describe this alternative headspace.



My first time taking mushrooms was as easy as one of the best, most significant days of my life: playful, exploratory, spiritual."

Many well-known research institutions such as Johns Hopkins and UCLA are exploring how psilocybin is being used for mental health treatments and can bring on a "mystical experience," defined by "scale scores" of seven criteria. What scientists are finding is that the degree to which a patient undergoes a mystical experience often correlates to the degree of healing they experience for whatever condition they are treating, be it anxiety, depression, or something else.

"When you optimally screen, facilitate and integrate these [psychedelic] experiences, you can almost reliably facilitate a mystical-level kind of encounter, which may be predictive of positive therapeutic outcomes," said Dr. Charles Grob, psychedelic researcher and UCLA professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences.

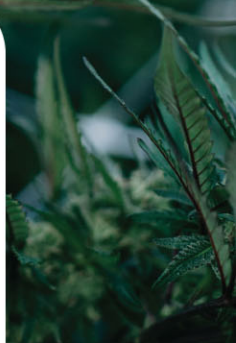
To put it bluntly, the promise of psychedelic therapy is forcing researchers to grapple with notions of God or mysticism that have otherwise been absent from Western science and medicine. Indigenous cultures, on the other hand, are well-known for structured spiritual-medicinal approaches and traditions that incorporate psychedelic plant medicine, such as ayahuasca, magic mushrooms or peyote.

Grob notes that clinicians have much to learn from indigenous practices, which "were entirely dependent on a harmonious relationship with the world of nature for shelter, for food, for continuity and for societal groups."

He goes on to say that the psychedelic experience may be symbolic of a death and rebirth ritual. That could be thanks to the experience of "ego death" — a psychedelic-induced dampening of the brain's default mode network (DMN), where the ego resides. Ego death, or "ego dissolution," can act as a reset for the DMN, helping to rewire thought patterns that were otherwise constrained by the ego, and facilitating an increase in personality traits like openness or empathy.

In breaking out of old thought patterns, a person who experiences ego death may also obtain a degree of healing from habits that previously kept them in a loop, particularly in addiction. Turning down the volume on the ego can also help engender a sense of oneness with the surrounding world, people or nature.

"The ego is looking after us," Grob says. "There's good reason to be compassionate toward the ego: It's trying to do its best, but it's not useful, and it overshoots in what it



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does and disconnects us. What psychedelics do is turn down the defenses.”

The ego’s defenses can manifest in addictions, such as eating disorders, compulsions and obsessions. “They’re all a maladaptive defense response to adversity,” says Dr. Robin Carhart-Harris, Head of the Centre for Psychedelic Research at Imperial College London.

Through psychedelic therapy, Grob says, we can engineer a context in which it’s safe to let the ego go off duty and allow us to be vulnerable in a caring, nurturing environment. “It’s about going backwards to go forward,” he said. “Being vulnerable to be stronger, more flexible, more capacious.”

SAFE TRAVELS

Finding the right setting for a psychedelic experience is up to the beholder; it could be in a therapist’s office, a spiritual ceremony, with friends at a music concert, or decidedly alone in the woods. Once that ideal setting is found, one can relax and focus their mindset on whatever kind of healing or intention they set out to explore with the help of

psychedelic medicine.

Even back in the ’60s, Grob says, pioneer researchers “found that those who had a mystical-level experience had improved quality of life.”

With psilocybin in particular, he said, “the replicability and degree to which the trip might happen, and the depth is more apparent” — than perhaps with other psychedelics such as LSD — because the six to eight-hour trip is “easier to control” than something that could otherwise be twice as long.

Despite the growing amount of research, psychedelic scientists have yet to fully comprehend how substances such as psilocybin work in the brain. Psilocybin definitely stimulates the serotonin 2A receptor in the brain and can occasion ego death by dampening the default mode network. Even so, the compound remains a mystery.

That said, there’s mounting evidence that psilocybin — much like cannabis — can facilitate healing from a variety of mental health conditions, including anxiety, depression, addiction, and eating disorders, among others. It can also

“ There’s mounting evidence that psilocybin — much like cannabis — can facilitate healing from a variety of mental health conditions, including anxiety, depression, addiction and eating disorders, among others.”



“When comparing psilocybin and cannabis, there’s no competition. The psilocybin experience has the potential of facilitating a life-changing kind of event.”

increase the personality trait of openness, allowing the afflicted to become more amenable to new patterns and solutions, and enhancing general well-being for those who are otherwise already well.

While people who use cannabis medicinally can get a great deal of relief from chronic pain or mood disturbance, Grob says it’s more of a lifestyle drug. “The effects of cannabis are dwarfed in comparison with the potential that psilocybin or LSD might have in evoking a powerful altered state of consciousness that allows individuals to see themselves and the world around

them and their lives in a novel manner,” he said.

In other words, psilocybin offers more bang for your buck if you compare it to regular cannabis use.

#TBT

Around the peak of that Venice Beach mushroom trip so long ago, my friends and I decided to venture out of our apartment and head to the ocean. As the sun set and temps started to cool, the winds picked up.

“I’m shivering, but it’s not me,” I said through chattering teeth. I looked down at my hand with curiosity, flipping my palm over and under, upside and down, as if it was someone else’s hand.

I plopped down on the shore, near the sunset drum circle that takes place every Sunday. It smelled like weed, but I wondered how many others were also on shrooms. I remembered what my sister had said about psilocybin feeling like “weed plus,” but this was so much better. So. Much. Better.

“There’s no competition,” Grob said, when comparing psilocybin and cannabis. “The psilocybin experience has the potential of facilitating a life-changing kind of event.” Precisely how I felt about one of the best, most significant days of my life.

A huge smile crept across my face, and I was feeling more in touch with my essence than ever before. “*Ohh, be here now*,” I giggled, referencing the phrase and title of Ram Dass’ famous book which my parents had introduced me to as a child. “I get it,” I thought.

It was the first time I felt that sacred sense of time and space, of being in the moment — *in my body* — without feeling an attachment to the chronological series of events that took me here. I just was, feeling a sense of “is-ness.” I was simply being, and my nervous system, with all its anxieties and temporal attachments, was for once at rest.

My memory of that mind-bending Venice Beach experience remains vivid. The spiritual nourishment and sense of mystique from that day are still with me, infusing my life with the magic of those mushrooms. “These are like waking dreams,” Grob said. “Sometimes it’s important to just sit back and look objectively at the scene playing in front of you, and how that relates to your life.” ✨

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JIM BELUSHI

GETS REAL



THE COMEDIC ACTOR CREDITS CANNABIS WITH CHANGING HIS LIFE FOR THE BETTER. TIME TO PASS IT ON.



BY CHRIS KUDIALIS | PHOTOS TYLER MADDOX

TO WATCH JIM BELUSHI LAUGH without abandon is to see the best of America on his joyful face, an America that's unaffected by divisions or dangers at every turn: We see a deeply happy version of our next door neighbor. And it's a welcome sight to be sure.

Jim Belushi is puffing on a cigar as he cruises through Oregon, taking his time on a late summer afternoon to talk fame, pain and cannabis from his inconspicuous-looking sedan. His royal blue polo shirt and black-framed glasses speak to a humility that one would think would be far-fetched from a man whose long career in the public eye has made him a household name.

Appearing in dozens of films including "About Last Night...", "Trading Places" and "Red Heat," and starring and executive producing the ratings juggernaut TV sitcom, "According to Jim," Belushi says he's never been happier than at this very moment in his nearly seven decades on the planet. Not because of anything he's done in Hollywood, or any big business deals he's made. This Belushi 2.0 is reveling in his new passionate relationship, a profound and inspiring one, with cannabis.

The plain-spoken celebrity used the plant back in the day, he says, but he's only recently been able to truly embrace it. The 93-acre Belushi's Farm in southwest Oregon employs 15 people and will produce 1,600 pounds of flower this year. And it's all just to spread medicine to people who have waited their entire lives to replace their prescriptions. Belushi has been such a welcome presence in Oregon that

the second season of his hit Discovery Channel show, "Growing Belushi," is set to premiere at the end of the year. The Belushi good vibes just keep rolling.

"I measure success by the letters and the tweets that I get from people who say our cannabis has helped them," Belushi says when asked what success looks like to him now. "I got my 'According to Jim' bucks, so as long as I break even, I'm satisfied."

Belushi, whose brilliant older brother John tragically died of a drug overdose at the Chateau Marmont in Los Angeles back in 1982, shares stories of people whose lives he's been able to impact and celebrates the importance of the many cannabis trailblazers who came before him. Some of those trailblazers are still in prison, he points out, his frustration evident. That's why Belushi supports the non-profit Last Prisoner Project, an organization that helps free people convicted of low-level marijuana crimes during the more than eight decades of cannabis prohibition.

But, for the better part of the hour I spent with the smart, witty Chicago native, he was in the mood to communicate. A few minutes into our convo, Belushi is amazingly comparing the soulful, feminine energy he feels from his pot plants to an oracle that speaks to Apollo and Zeus in Greek mythology. Personally, I can't get enough — his passion is undeniable, and the urgency he feels to reach more and more people who need help is palpable. Belushi, as if on cue, then reveals how he even plays his harmonica to his beloved plants, since they're clearly listening and celebrating right along with him. I believe him.

But we had so much more to discuss and discover.

WHAT MAKES YOUR MARIJUANA DIFFERENT FROM THE DOZENS AND DOZENS OF OTHER COMPETITORS YOU HAVE IN OREGON?

I look at it like the film industry. There are a lot of great movies out there. You go to a movie and it's great, and you and your girl want to go to another movie because you had a good experience.

Good cannabis makes people want to have more good experiences, so they should try everybody's product. Ours is right up there in the Oregon market as being very, very good weed. We have great THC values, but more importantly we have tremendous terpene values.

I have an excellent grower and we're growing with natural nutrients. I'm flushing their irrigation out two weeks before so it's a perfect white ash. I'm keeping the soil at 64 degrees so the nutrients will be absorbed into the roots. We've got light-dep greenhouses, so we protect the growing environment from the aphids and the mold and russet mites. And we also have that beautiful southern Oregon soil.

HOW DOES YOUR CANNABIS STAND OUT, THEN, LIKE A GOOD FILM WOULD?

That's a very good question and it's one of those questions where I cannot give you certain things [Laughs]. We do have some secret moves that other growers don't have and that we covet.

We just went over to Advanced Nutrients, which has been really good. And we just built two new greenhouses by Gro-Tec with really great high ceilings. We changed to Fohse LED lights, which creates about 30 percent more penetration into the plants when we need to augment the light if it's cloudy, in order to keep the lumens up close to 1100 (watts). It ensures there's consistency in the plant. We supplement with (Medford, Oregon-based) Rogue Soil, which is packed with great natural nutrients and gives our plants a great boost and great color.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN HAPPIER THAN YOU ARE AT THIS VERY MOMENT?

I've done a lot of personal work, and it really started when I bought this farm, along the Rogue River, the middle of the spiritual vortex between Mount McGlothlin and Table Rock. There was a Native American vortex of spirituality here and now we've brought in this spiritual plant.

Here's the thing, I do believe this plant has changed me. Being alongside of it, caring for it and loving it. I play my harmonica for these girls. The relationship with these plants has changed me. They've enlightened me and made me a better person. So, I have to say, yes, I'm probably in the best place than I've ever been, and I attribute it all to, like, starting a relationship with this old beautiful feminine energy. The Oracle is a feminine creature that tells Apollo and Zeus what to do. Well, the Oracle on my farm are these plants, and let's just say we treat them like that.

WHAT'S THE EXTENT OF YOUR INVOLVEMENT ON YOUR FARM?

I collaborate with my grower, Anthony Anaya. I've gone through three growers, and I finally found a winner with Anthony. He's like Elvis Presley! [Laughs] He's been in the industry for 15 years in Oregon and he knows his stuff. I collaborate with him; I collaborate with Jeremy and my cousin Chris. It's like, you can't do a movie or a show by yourself. You need directors, producers, writers, prop people and cameramen.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE SOME OF THE MOST SURPRISING CHALLENGES YOU'VE FACED AS A CANNABIS GROWER THAT PERHAPS YOU WEREN'T EXPECTING?

I wasn't expecting the aphids, mites, gophers, squirrels, deer and mold. They never tell you that stuff when you put your money out and invest in this industry. Wow! We lost 300 pounds last year to mold alone. That's why I've made recent shifts in our products. It helps us control the environment enough to eradicate pests and mold while using natural remedies.

HOW HAVE THE WILDFIRES IN THE AREA AND RECORD HEAT OVER THE PAST COUPLE SUMMERS AFFECTED YOUR ABILITY TO GROW CANNABIS?

They've affected the employees, but not the plants. It gets very smoky, and we make everyone wear masks for protection. The heat during that time is at around 115°F — we keep the plants hydrated, so they can survive that just fine. During the last fire, the employees started working at six in the morning and left early before the main heat of the day.

IS IT TRUE THAT DAN AYKROYD'S COMMENT ABOUT YOUR LATE BROTHER JOHN PLAYED A ROLE IN INSPIRING YOU TO GET INVOLVED IN POT?

Absolutely! Danny was a pothead, but he didn't mess with other drugs. I'm not saying John didn't use cannabis, but I still think John's stuff possibly came from other things like CTE from playing football. Look, we have 33,000 veterans committing suicide a year. PTSD — what it does to these men and these women — the scarring and the traumas: I really think cannabis can help relieve some of their trauma and help them make better decisions.

I once met a veteran in a dispensary parking lot. I looked at him and I said, "Are you alright?" He said, "No, I was a medic in Iraq. I saw things happen to the human body that nobody should ever see." He said doctors gave him OxyContin and he just couldn't do it. But cannabis got him off OxyContin. And he tells me, "Your Black Diamond OG strain allows me to talk to my wife and talk to my children and sleep." He hugged me and I said, "Hey man, I didn't make this." He says "No, but you're the steward."

That moment became a paradigm shift in my relationship with our industry. So, yeah, I'm chasing the medicine. The magic of the medicine.



Belushi says he's overwhelmed with gratitude to have been led to the Rogue River and be a part this agricultural and healing circle of life.



"I do believe this plant has changed me."

BEING ALONGSIDE OF IT, CARING FOR IT AND
LOVING IT. I PLAY MY HARMONICA FOR THESE
GIRLS. THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THESE PLANTS
HAS CHANGED ME. THEY'VE ENLIGHTENED ME
AND MADE ME A BETTER PERSON."





THE ARC OF YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN FASCINATING — FROM JUVENILE PROBATION AND BEING IN TROUBLE AS A KID TO HAVING A BIG HOLLYWOOD CAREER AND NOW JUST NARROWLY ESCAPING THE AREA’S MASSIVE WILDFIRES. YOU’VE BEEN ADJACENT TO A LOT OF STUFF, BUT SOMEHOW HAVE BEEN ABLE TO NAVIGATE EVERYTHING. DO YOU FEEL THERE’S SOMEONE OR SOMETHING WATCHING OVER YOU?

I’m on mission from God. [Long pause] I just listen. What do you want me to say? [Pause] I just keep looking for the light, for something bigger than myself. Within our industry, it’s medicine.

Another thing that’s really big for me is the Last Prisoners Project. It’s our duty in this industry to get these men and women out of jail. They were the pioneers; they were the ones that laid on the barbed wire for us to get legalization and make a living. We got to get them out of jail, and we got to hire them within our industry.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE IN MIND FOR EXPANDING YOUR CANNABIS FOOTPRINT?

There’s a lot of talk going on. And right now, I’m with RedBird in Oklahoma. Then with Columbia Care, and the Green Solution in Colorado. I got a Blues Brothers ice cream brand being launched and also Blues Brothers Bhang Chocolates, which are really good.

I currently have four brands: The Blues Brothers brand, of which we have three or four different types of joints. It has a flip-top box so we can put it in a shirt sleeve. We call them Baby Blues, a little six-pack. We have the single gram joint, which we call Rocket 88. And then I have Chasing Magic, which is my secret stash and really the higher premium brand of what we grow.

And now we just released the Captain Jack joint in Oregon.



Oh, and we’ve also just released Good Ugly Weed, which is really good weed.

GOOD UGLY WEED SEEMS TO BE VERY ON-BRAND FOR YOU: A LITTLE SCRUFFY, BUT ALSO TOTALLY LOVABLE AND SUPER POWERFUL.

It may be ugly, but it’s good, man! [Laughs] We just put out some Good Ugly Weed at 24 percent THC. It’s a value brand and the dispensaries are just dying for it. The profit margin on it isn’t huge, but I got my comedy bucks, you know. So as long as I break even on it.

HOW MANY DIFFERENT STRAINS DO YOU GROW AT A TIME AND IN HOW MANY DISPENSARIES IS YOUR PRODUCT CURRENTLY SOLD?

We have in our library around 20 different genetics. With our new Gro-Tech greenhouses, we can grow up to eight genetics



“I WASN'T EXPECTING THE APHIDS, MITES, GOPHERS, SQUIRRELS, DEER AND MOLD. THEY NEVER TELL YOU THAT STUFF WHEN YOU PUT YOUR MONEY OUT AND INVEST IN THIS INDUSTRY.”

at a time. With four cycles and four greenhouses, we have a lot of flexibility.

ANY PLANS TO EXPAND WITH CBD?

I just created a CBD tincture for my dog. It's a tincture of 500 milligrams, full-spectrum, called K-9ine. And it's only offered on my website, I'm just putting it out there for other dog lovers. And I know it works: My dog couldn't walk for three days, but then he chased me up the stairs.

OF ALL THE CANNABIS LEGAL STATES. WHAT DREW YOU TO DO BUSINESS IN OREGON, COLORADO, OKLAHOMA AND ILLINOIS? WAS IT JUST A MATTER OF LESS BARRIERS TO ENTRY OR WAS THERE ANYTHING MORE?

Well, I've also talked to companies in California, Nevada, and Pennsylvania. In Oregon and the other states where you can be a cultivator and distribute, I'm just having better luck.

ARE YOU TRYING TO BECOME THE BOBBY FLAY OF CANNABIS, OR ARE YOU MORE OF THE OPRAH? THROUGH YOUR SHOW, YOU'RE MAKING CANNABIS EASY FOR THE PERSON WHO HAS NO CONNECTION TO ANY OF THIS.

I think I have what it takes to create competence in cannabis. There are so many people that are curious about it, and I'm trying to use “Growing Belushi” to try and bridge that curiosity and show the viewers how it's grown, how it's tested as well as some of the medical things that revolve around it. Also, show them, this is how you smoke a vape pen; this is how you take an edible.

HAVE YOU HAD TO DEAL WITH ANY CHEST-POUNDING TROLLS ON TWITTER FOR BEING A BELUSHI AND ALSO CHAMPIONING CANNABIS?

No, I haven't experienced that. But I'll tell you why. Everybody knows somebody who's suffering. Everybody wants to stop their relatives or their friends from suffering, and they're curious about



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cannabis. I know a lot of people are targeting the youth with cannabis, but there's a lot of interest among Baby Boomers, too.

I literally take people into a dispensary and say "Look, it's not a mom-and-pop place; it's not where drug dealers are hanging out. It looks like an Apple Store." I encourage people to just try going into a dispensary and not to be frightened.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE FOR YOU NOW? IS THIS MOMENT DIFFERENT BECAUSE YOU'RE IN IT FOR THE LONG GAME AND YOU'RE IN IT TO HELP PEOPLE?

I measure success by the letters and the tweets that I get from people who say our cannabis has helped them. Another measure that I've already reached is breaking even on the business side of things! [Laughs] I'm investing in myself. Instead of the stock market, I'm investing in the farm.



IS "GROWING BELUSHI" GOING INTERNATIONAL?

Yes, it's an international show now. We just made a deal with a foreign distribution company that's taking it all over the world.

HA! SO, YOU ARE BECOMING CANNABIS' ANSWER TO BOBBY FLAY OR GUY FIERI!

[Laughs] Guy Fieri is actually in the show! He comes to the farm, and I make my ice cream for him, my chocolate. We cook some Albanian dishes. He cooks in my backyard and we make ribs in a smoker. The episode is awesome. 🌿

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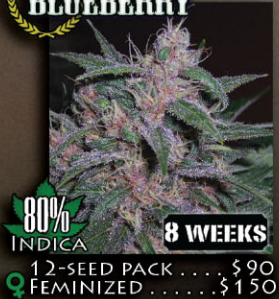
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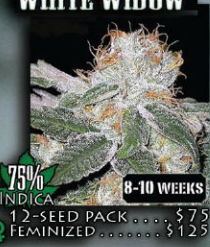
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Stohs' photography, found on Instagram as @surface_area999, contains many creative cannabis works such as this nug in the sky.

Not OF THIS WORLD

As the de-stigmatization of cannabis continues, photographer Marvin Lee Stohs captures the flower's power revealing alien lands and unfathomable beauty.

BY ZACK RUSKIN | PHOTOS MARVIN LEE STOHS

WHEN IT COMES TO cannabis photography, Marvin Lee Stohs is a name worth remembering.

Working out of Washington State, the 30-year-old, better known online as Surface Area, has quickly become an in-demand photographer of buds, badders and all things weed. Known for his insanely detailed shots — what Stohs calls “a glimpse into an alien world” — the lensman’s indelible work has netted him more than 35k followers on Instagram alone. Stohs’ success isn’t a simple matter of luck, however, and it doesn’t come from simply pointing a camera and hitting the shutter. His rocky journey to the top has been paved with hard work at every step along the way.

A self-taught photographer, Stohs launched his professional career nearly a decade ago when he found work with international clients, as well as several Burlington, VT-area head shops that hired him to photograph vaporizers. But, starting in 2017, the success of Initiative 502 in Washington State (passed in 2012) inspired Stohs to switch gears and test his talents in the then-nascent legal cannabis industry. Long before deciding to focus on super macro cannabis photography, Stohs says that he listened to his gut and combined his dual passions — photography and cannabis — and that proved to be extraordinarily valuable.

“Vaping was becoming kind of unpopular at that time, and as soon as weed became legal, I knew there was going to be some type of market for photographers in the industry,” Stohs said.

Stohs says his own approach and ultimate aesthetic in much of his work is inspired by some of the biggest names in cannabis photography, including Sean Moore (Dankshire) and Erik Christiansen (Nugshots). At the same time, the budding photographer also knew it was

vital that he get a body of relevant work under his belt as quickly as possible.

“I basically did what every beginning cannabis photographer does,” Stohs said of his first attempt at establishing a name for himself. “I went to the weed shop, bought one of my favorite products sold by the company, took pictures of it, and posted it on social media and tagged them. Then you hope that they’ll take the bait and send you a direct message the next day asking about your pictures.”

He was an instant hit. Almost immediately a popular Washington cannabis brand reached out to Stohs and commissioned him for work — some of which was later featured in *High Times*. It was, according to Stohs, exactly the type of recognition and cache he was hoping for. And things have only gotten better from there.

SOCIAL MEDIA WOES

Today, Stohs’ work is collected on Instagram, where a scroll through his feed reveals a veritable kaleidoscope of far-out, expertly captured images of cannabis in all forms. Whether he’s soliciting followers to guess the weight of a jar of badder or sharing his latest shots from Washington’s top cultivators and extractors, the business of being a cannabis photographer is one Stohs conducts exclusively through the ubiquitous social media platform.

But as legions of influencers, brand and content creators can attest, life as a cannabis-affiliated Instagram poster is also one frequently fraught with fear and anxiety, due to the platform’s seemingly never-ending crusade against weed.

“It’s really difficult to be a content creator in today’s age, especially with how many restrictions are being put on cannabis content shared on Instagram and Facebook,”

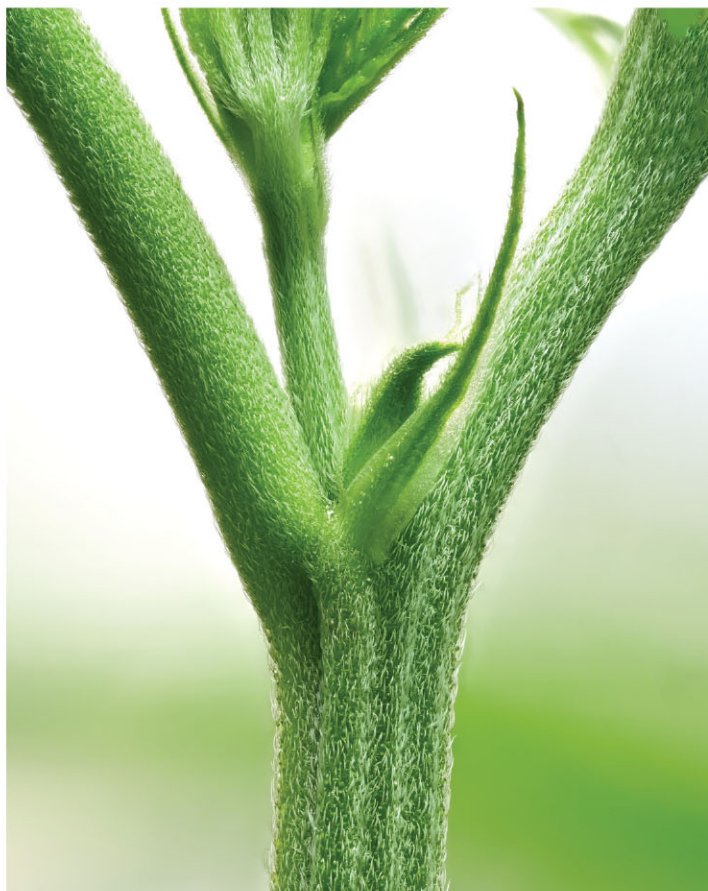
“AS SOON AS
WEED BECAME
LEGAL, I KNEW
THERE WAS GOING
TO BE SOME TYPE
OF MARKET FOR
PHOTOGRAPHERS
IN THE INDUSTRY.”





LEFT: A close-up look
at a jar of seeds from
Cloneworld Northwest.





“IT’S REALLY DIFFICULT TO BE A CONTENT CREATOR IN TODAY’S AGE, ESPECIALLY WITH HOW MANY RESTRICTIONS ARE BEING PUT ON CANNABIS CONTENT SHARED ON INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK. I CONSTANTLY LIVE IN A STATE OF ANXIETY EVERY TIME I PRESS ‘SHARE’ ON ANY POSTS.”

Stohs weighs. “I constantly live in a state of anxiety every time I press ‘share’ on any posts, on any account that I work with. I’m worried that my posts might get flagged or that my account may be deleted for the tenth time.”

In total, Stohs says his main Instagram handle, @surface_area999, has already been pulled a staggering 15 times. Though he’s been able to successfully recover it in each instance, Stohs explained that cannabis photographers relying on the platform remain in an anxiety-inducing situation, without much hope for change.

“That’s my entire business,” he says. “I don’t have any other websites or social media platforms. I run my entire business on Instagram, so it’s very, very stressful for me to be living like this all the time. I’ve also seen a lot of social influencers who are switching to different apps and kicking themselves in the butt because they lost their 60k follower-strong account that they’d worked more than a decade to build. I hope it gets better, but I just don’t think it will.”

FLOWER POWER

While Stohs’ nerves surrounding Instagram show no signs of waning, he’s on firmer ground — almost upbeat — when

it comes to the issue of de-stigmatizing cannabis. Recalling his own upbringing, Stohs shared that his mother was once fervently anti-cannabis, going so far as to tell him that anyone who smoked weed would “never amount to anything.” Though the process wasn’t easy, Stohs says his mom has subsequently come around on the subject. Now, as a father himself, he’s enjoying the results of taking a decidedly different approach to cannabis with his own daughter.

“When I was growing up, I always felt afraid to get in trouble because of weed,” he said. “So, today, being able to sit on my back porch and watch my daughter run around with pot leaves from weed plants we’re growing and showing her how to grow and how to trim... it’s just a super remarkable feeling. In my daughter’s young mind, it’s got to be the complete opposite of how we felt as children. I come home with weed, and she tells me it’s beautiful because I’ve taught her that weed is, in fact, a flower.”

Beyond his efforts to normalize cannabis within his own immediate family, Stohs’ striking photography also gives the rest of us another medium to appreciate the plant’s natural qualities and transcendent beauty. One of his new favorite approaches is objective microscopic photography, in which fields of glistening trichomes and rich globs of concentrate are revealed in detail

Above: GMO Terps on the Rocks by Gold N' Grams **Below:** Papaya from Rosin Evolution.

“A LOT OF US ARE GETTING INTO OBJECTIVE MICROSCOPIC PHOTOGRAPHY. WE’RE TAKING PICTURES THAT YOU CAN’T SEE UNLESS YOU’RE USING A MICROSCOPE! PEOPLE MIGHT THINK THAT THEY’RE ‘JUST TAKING PICTURES’ BUT I DISAGREE.”

unavailable to the naked eye. Even though Stohs is the one taking the photos, he says he’s still personally blown away by what his camera reveals.

“At this point, a lot of us are getting into objective microscopic photography. We’re taking pictures that you can’t see unless you’re using a fucking microscope!” he says incredulously.

“Look, a lot of people might think that they’re ‘just taking pictures’ but I disagree. No, I don’t take pictures, I take super macro pictures of alien worlds within plants. The moment I saw how otherworldly this stuff looks in this format, it just immediately had me hooked.” ✨



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THE QUEEN OF CANNABIS ACTIVIST ART

Savina Monet's vivid, Technicolor collage work is inspired by her mother and a love of teaching.

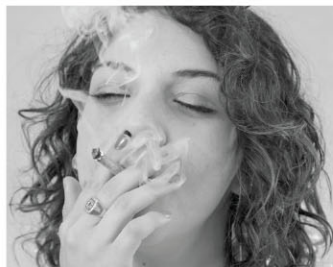
BY K. ASTRE

WHEN IT COMES TO the effortless blend of art and activism in Savina Monet's work, it's hard for her to say which came first. It's a chicken-egg conundrum that combines her mother's ingenuity and fortitude with her own go-getter attitude that inspired her artistic career path.

"My mom was really creative when I was growing up," the Portland-based Monet said. "Whatever we didn't have, we would make. From a young age, I learned how to put things together with whatever I could get from salvaged materials and whatever else I could find. In a way, my artwork became a chance for me to channel my upbringing and start a conversation about cannabis to continue to normalize the plant."

It makes sense that Monet is passionate about collaging, a technique that creates one cohesive piece of work from an assemblage of seemingly unrelated materials such as pictures, paper clippings and fabric scraps. She's found a way to digitally

continue the tradition of her childhood by pulling inspiration from different places to create eye-catching designs. The self-taught graphic designer and artist uses her



work to draw viewers into her world of whimsy, weed and wonder — with built-in political undertones calling out the stigma that still surrounds cannabis.

"I moved to Portland right around when the adult market was legalized," Monet said. "It was a really weird place to be where a small bubble of Oregon was

celebrating, but outside of Portland there was still a really big stigma around cannabis use. It really seemed like my artwork was needed at that time."

VINTAGE, YET MODERN

At a quick glance, Monet's Technicolor work is a feast for minimalists who love lush and uncomplicated art. But a closer look draws you into the details and the message. Retro beauties elegantly puff on joints; icons such as Spike Lee and Eartha Kitt are juxtaposed with cannabis fan leaves; and dense buds playfully replace objects ranging from funky hair styles to broomsticks for weed-wielding witches. This subtlety is intentional — it's Monet's way of giving people a gentle step toward normalizing cannabis use.

"I'm a big fan of exposure therapy where you're encouraged to just face the thing you're avoiding so you can become desensitized to it," Monet says with a smile.



Her art has an undeniable vintage vibe that also embodies a modern twist that ensures the cannabis plant is the main message — even if it's not always front and center.

“My work is for people who are uncomfortable with weed,” the talented artist says. “I do a good job of blending cannabis into my work, so it may almost feel like it's hidden. Someone who may be against weed might like a particular work, and when they look a little harder, then realize there's weed featured in it.”

Monet says these exact kinds of moments have led to interesting conversations where she's had the opportunity to educate people who weren't open-minded about cannabis. She sees these interactions as fun social experiments where her art becomes a teaching platform.

RELAX, IT'S ART

Monet lets it be widely known that her work is a significant part of her activism advocating for cannabis. “I've always been an outspoken person when it comes to cannabis, but since working in the industry, I've been inspired to learn more about our collective civic duty and to better understand the law,” Monet said.

As co-founder of the Cannabis Workers Coalition and We Are MOTA (Minorities for Opportunity, Transparency & Accountability in Cannabis), Monet champions fair labor practices in the cannabis and hemp industries. “Around the beginning of the pandemic, there was a lot of uncertainty and confusion,” she said. “Workers were afraid of getting sick or losing their jobs, so it seemed like the right time to unify the voice of the labor movement in cannabis.”

Both of her organizations have the goal of building an equitable, inclusive future for people of color within the industry. The energy Monet puts into her activism has clearly inspired her recent creations. Because she puts so much intense focus into strategizing and organizing on her civic agenda, Monet said her work has become even more chill to balance out the high energy. Her art has always been a pleasant escape from reality, but more than ever, she's using it as a way to relax and create a separate space from her activist work.



“I'D LOVE TO START DOING MORE MURALS AND EVEN HAVE MY WORK IN DISPENSARIES — I WANT TO SHOW MORE OF MY ARTISTIC SIDE.”

The steady pace hasn't stopped Monet from fine tuning her plans for the future. Since working in the cannabis industry, she's seen her workload grow tenfold with the ever-evolving relationship between society and weed. As views, opinions and access to information continue to shift, she hopes to see the scope of her work expand to larger projects.

“I'd love to start doing more murals and even have my work in dispensaries,” Monet says. “I really want to show more of my artistic side. You know, it still feels a little funny calling myself an artist — but I'm ready to explore that and take my work to another level.” ✨

A NEW LOOK AT HEMP

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A member of the Theory Wellness team works at one of the company's environmentally sound farms in Massachusetts.

The Big East: THEORY WELLNESS

How this six-year-old Berkshires dispensary and cannabis brand reimagined what was possible in the booming industry.

BY RICHARD PÉREZ-FERIA

WALKING INTO THEORY WELLNESS, an impeccably styled, high-end East Coast dispensary, I felt the same excitement I had the first time I stepped foot into a fabled Beverly Hills luxury retailer back in the day. And I loved it.

Fred Segal is, in essence, a luxury conglomeration of (mostly) one-of-a-kind boutiques that all live within the chic walls of its only-in-LA retail campus; think of it as a couture farmers market, but instead of \$8 heirloom tomatoes you're surrounded by \$400 T-shirts, \$1200 boots and \$700 sunglasses. It's an intoxicating, surreal shopping trek for retail rookies, to be sure, but once you experience this particular elevated gauntlet of sticker shock privilege, you find yourself wanting more. So. Much. More.

Upon entering the buzzy dispensary for the first time (after waiting in line and going through the required ID verification process), it took me all the way back to those heady days so many years ago in Los Angeles. Theory Wellness — at least its super busy Great Barrington, MA location in the bucolic Berkshires region — would fit right in at my favorite luxe retailer as it touts its many best-in-class cannabis offerings. Theory Wellness isn't what most of our mothers think of when they imagine a marijuana dispensary: It's clean, smartly designed, expertly managed, and, ultimately, a first-rate shopping experience. It's ready for primetime. Even the staff at the registers are cannabis experts not unlike the Apple Store's Genius Bar squad. Very cool.

I met up with the company's young and affable Marketing VP, Thomas Winstanley, to help guide me through the excellent maze that is Theory Wellness, and we talked and talked as we watched the crowded dispensary operate without a hitch. It was, to say the least, impressive, and all I kept thinking about was how much money they must be making right now. Winstanley, a proud millennial, was apparently determined to single-handedly dispel all perceived negative stereotypes associated with his generation merely by being whip smart and displaying a contagious indefatigable energy. It was, again, impressive, but it was also incredibly

on-brand, as Theory Wellness' co-founders are a pair of *millennialpreneurs*, CEO Brandon Pollock and Chief Strategy Officer Nick Friedman. If these guys met, say, two decades ago, one could imagine these BFFs launching a competitor search engine to Google to take on that giant's own dynamic duo co-founders.

Pollock smiled when I brought up the search engine's co-founders; he didn't disagree. "Yeah, it could've been, yes!" Pollock said, laughing. "Even though we weren't first to market in Massachusetts for a medical dispensary [Theory was 12th], we've been really fortunate with our team who really embody the spirit of doing cannabis right and carry out the company's mantra of focusing on our customers first."

To hear the independently owned, vertically integrated, small-batch, craft cannabis company's marketing/public relations/social media/customer relations expert, Winstanley, merrily recount the earliest days of Theory Wellness — a whopping six years ago — you'd think cell phones and the internet weren't around yet. But, as he insisted, time moves extraordinarily fast in the cannabis industry; so, half a decade in dispensary years feels like a veritable lifetime.

Look, to buy into what Theory's selling isn't difficult, and undeniably evident with my own eyes. This is a world-class cannabis company that prioritizes details and a positive customer experience, precisely as Pollock and Friedman conceived it to be. So, no, it's not complicated, perhaps, but exceedingly difficult to pull off consistently. That's what moves Theory Wellness from being simply good to decidedly great — and maybe even legendary.

"Theory began as a medical cannabis brand in Massachusetts following the roll-out of the state program," Winstanley said. "Patients and wellness have always been at the heart of our business and where our company originates from. We produce more than 70 products that we sell at our stores, both to patients and recreational customers. Each product is specifically designed, tested and packaged to provide a customer with a premium



Also, according to Winstanley, many of the giant players in the industry — including MedMen and Aurora Cannabis — are posting losses. Theory Wellness numbers show that it's growing and scaling at unprecedented rates showcasing the power of a hungry company. The secret, according to Theory, is that they operate more like a start-up than traditional brands. The formula is working like a charm.

But, today, another unexpected competitor is upsetting the apple cart for many cannabis operators: the illicit cannabis market. Winstanley says that legal cannabis sales haven't



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proliferated to the extent that a significant market share has been consumed from the black market. “The products are cheaper, untested, and you don’t need licenses or IDs to purchase.”

But, after years of vacationing and enjoying the Berkshires region of Massachusetts — particularly its chic epicenter, the picture-postcard slice of Americana that is the town of Great Barrington — I wanted to know how this unlikely, scenic, low-key destination suddenly became widely regarded as the Humboldt County of the East Coast.

Northern California’s Humboldt County, of course, is universally known as the mecca for West Coast cannabis and now, in a matter of a few short years, Great Barrington has emerged as the title holder on the other side of the country. But how?

“The whole cannabis dispensary industry in Great Barrington is crazy, it’s become this whole thing, like a cannabis-centric area in the East Coast,” Pollock said. “My business partner Nick grew up in Great Barrington, and when we launched our medical company we realized that Berkshire County, which has about 130,000 residents, didn’t have a single cannabis dispensary because existing operators were focused on more high-density population centers. People were driving an hour-and-a-half each way just to get their medicine. There was a huge need here, so we opened our dispensary soon thereafter.”

While currently enjoying such a rosy financial picture, I wondered in what areas, specifically, Pollock believed Theory could

improve, if at all. “*Everything!* Our ethos is ‘the more you learn, the more you realize you don’t know anything’ and we’re always trying to improve every touchpoint with customers, every touchpoint in our production — every aspect of our organization needs improvement, particularly the two biggest issues facing the industry as a whole today: social justice and social equity and the environment.”

And Theory Wellness isn’t just talking the talk here: They decided to launch an unprecedented social equity program in Massachusetts and opened applications and interviews with economic empowerment candidates to apply for a sponsorship that included \$100,000 in debt-free financing, \$150,000 in wholesale consignment of products, and access to the brand’s legal, finances, insurance, and marketing solutions to help the new companies succeed. Winstanley says the initial recipient of Theory’s program, Legal Greens in Brockton, is

the first Black female-owned dispensary on the East Coast. Theory Wellness has had a two-year relationship with Legal Greens that continues to this day.

But it doesn’t stop there. Winstanley emphasized that Theory also looks to ensure they make local impacts across all of the company’s locations, even as they expand. “We’ve supported nearly two dozen non-profits thus far and those range from affordable housing in Great Barrington to a farmers market in Bangor, ME,” he said. “We feel it’s incumbent on us to use our success to demonstrate the positivity around cannabis.”



Inset: Theory Wellness’ Co-founders Nick Friedman and Brandon Pollock.



The company takes an equally serious approach when it comes to tackling our ever-warming planet. “This same approach comes with sustainability practices, too,” Winstanley says. “We have one of the first East Coast outdoor farms to reduce our environmental footprint. Theory uses green energy to power our indoor cultivation and we’re constantly introducing recyclable packaging solutions — we even have hybrid vehicles for our deliveries.”

On the product side, Winstanley was excited to discuss Theory’s small-batch unique genetics. “One of the more exciting elements of cannabis legalization is the breadth of knowledge cannabis consumers are developing,” he said. “We take this seriously in the same way a sommelier considers the *terroir* of the grapes he’s serving. We work directly with breeders to source genetics to complement our portfolio of flower that we think will find a good home in our indoor or outdoor gardens. The result speaks for itself with 50 percent of our sales coming from flower.”

THE FUTURE

Five years from now... Winstanley jumped in. “The simple answer is we just don’t know,” he said. “With so many New England states allowing recreational and medical marijuana use in the future, things are changing by the minute and we’re evaluating all possibilities. We find that cannabis time is not unlike dog years, so five years is really, really far away!” [Laughs]

Winstanley makes this next point emphatically. “We also firmly believe that the cannabis industry should be accessible to all,” he says. “The legacy of cannabis from the past generations has been embroiled in turmoil and hardships. It’s time to end that age and bring everyone a seat at the table to have the opportunity to capitalize and prevent it from being a pay-to-play industry. We want this industry open for all entrepreneurs from a diverse set of backgrounds.”

I put it to CEO Pollock a little differently: Why will and won’t Theory Wellness be successful forever? “First, I think we’re pretty good at anticipating the future while having a great team to navigate us once we’re



there,” he said, smiling. “We won’t be successful because, hopefully, a bunch of younger, hungrier, more diverse entrepreneurs beat us at our own game.”

Full disclosure: Prior to departing Theory’s still bustling retail floor, I purchased a couple of four-packs of the dispensary’s best-selling, game-changing, cannabis infused seltzer, Hi5 (pineapple and lemon, if you must know).

But the thing I’ll take away from this sunny day in the gorgeous Berkshires is, if I ever see Theory Wellness tucked away in a prime corner inside Fred Segal, I’ll smile to myself at the knowledge that I’d been right all along: Quality attracts quality — be it in Great Barrington or even Beverly Hills. ✨

Above: Theory collects Polaroids of any celebrity who enters the dispensary. **Inset:** VP of Marketing Thomas Winstanley



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Gimme a Hi5

They're happy little cans, aren't they?

I spotted them the moment I walked into legendary Berkshires dispensary Theory Wellness' busy Great Barrington, MA location. There, almost as if they were smiling at me, these smartly designed and packaged small cans of joy, had me at hello; well, "hi," to be precise.

Theory Wellness' popular flavored cannabis-infused drinks are elevating the seltzer game, no question. One way is alluded to, again, smartly, in the name: The all-natural, gluten-free, hangover-free, zero-calorie concoction actually "works" in five minutes (avoiding the, "I don't feel anything; I'll have another" trap). You feel the effects of either the regular (5 mg THC) or light (2.5 mg THC) offerings fast — Road Runner/Wile E. Coyote fast.

The question is, "How does it do that?" Theory Wellness credits its nano-emulsification process that allows them to bind THC to water (previously not possible since most edibles are fat-soluble), resulting in a faster onset of the effects, which takes the waiting game out of edibles. No wonder they're flying off the shelves.

Within six months of its debut, the dispensary had sold more than 700,000 cans of Hi5 in all six flavors — including two seasonal flavors of pineapple (summer) and cranberry (fall) — and they're also available in 45 dispensaries across Massachusetts.

"The Hi5 brand has been an incredibly fun project," says Thomas Winstanley, Theory Wellness' Vice President of Marketing. "A lot of the development happened during COVID where we were longing for interaction, social connection and missing the good times with friends. That comes through on the brand, and I think consumers enjoy it because it's the perfect product for social consumption as we all begin to reconnect with one another."

What better way to reconnect than to give (or receive) a Hi5? Hands up, people!

— Richard Pérez-Feria



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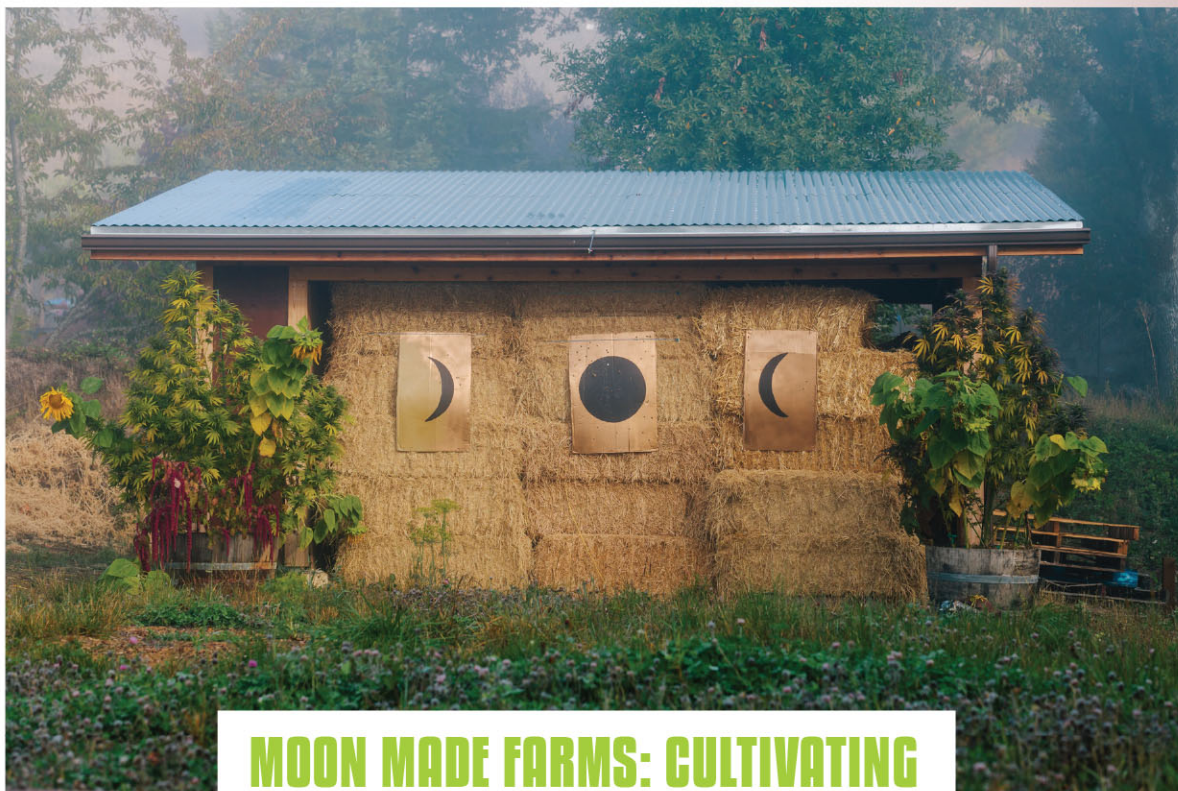
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MOON MADE FARMS: CULTIVATING WELLNESS FROM THE GROUND UP

The Humboldt County cannabis operation places health front and center.

DEEP IN THE HEART OF the Emerald Triangle, a 40-acre plot of land is the home of a small regenerative farm that serves as a connection between Earth and a community of consumers eager to enjoy the benefits of its natural bounty. Welcome to Moon Made Farms.

The small cannabis cultivation operation is nestled into an oak grove in southern Humboldt County, the hub of California's legacy marijuana industry. Tina Gordon, the steward of the land and founder of Moon Made Farms, says she realized it was a magical place when she first visited in 2007 to make a documentary film about the property's previous owner Joani Hannan, a 1950s and '60s drummer who blazed a trail for mid-twentieth century queer performers. After leaving behind the grit and decay of the big city, the tranquility and interconnectedness of the farm's natural surroundings spoke to Gordon's soul and revealed what was missing in her life.

"It shifted my consciousness and opened my eyes to the fact that we're living on a living planet," Gordon said. "Being from an urban area — from a city — I didn't recognize that I was living in captivity."

Gordon marveled at the abundance of nature she found in her new home: clean air, untreated water, a clearly visible

night sky and food harvested fresh from the land. Most importantly, the secluded piece of the Emerald Triangle is where her relationship with cannabis fully blossomed.

"Once I was here, I fell in love with the plant," she said.

A NEW CALLING

When she first moved to Humboldt, Gordon had no intention or even interest in becoming a cannabis cultivator. But when she saw the health and vigor expressed by plants grown in healthy soil and natural sunlight, she was inspired to make herself a part of the living process. Before long, she was learning to pay attention to the quality of the soil and how to improve its fertility naturally. She ensured the other plants growing among the cannabis were beneficial companions, providing natural protection from pests and disease. And as she nurtured and developed her garden, Gordon discovered her new passion was spilling into other aspects of her life.

"When I started taking care of these plants, I started taking care of myself better," Gordon says. "And that's how I embrace this plant as a living being — as my teacher."

After Hannan's death in 2012, ownership of the property passed to Gordon, ushering in the beginnings of Moon Made Farms.

BY A.J. HERRINGTON | PHOTOS KRISTEN ANGELO



Nestled in an oak grove in
southern Humboldt county,
Moon Made Farms is found.



NATURAL MEDICINE GROWS IN THE SUN

Now in her 15th year in Humboldt County, Gordon has transformed Moon Made Farms into an undeniably successful space that produces healing medicine from plants grown in natural soil and sunlight. Her cultivation practices surpass those of typical organics, eschewing the use of herbicides and pesticides while incorporating techniques that go beyond substituting inputs and build the health of the soil. And she isn't alone. With a like-minded supply chain of suppliers, processors and retailers, Gordon works to provide natural medicine that remains at the core of Moon Made Farms.

"The mission of Moon Made Farms is to honor the most powerful plant on the planet that expresses in the female form, and that's cannabis," Gordon says. "And by honoring this plant, we're participating in creating a regenerative supply chain."

Part of that chain is Jesse Dodd, an Emerald Triangle cannabis breeder who works under the handle Bio Vortex. Dodd's work with Gordon is a collaboration combining their deep knowledge. After discussing which traits Gordon wishes to maximize in her medicine, Dodd performs

crosses likely to produce the desired qualities in the next generation of plants. By working together, they create new varieties that are bred just for Moon Made Farms. Gordon takes over from there, coaxing the new seeds to their lush and productive potential.

"I feel very happy that the seeds have a very good home at her farm," Dodd said. "She shows them off really well. They can come to their full expression and just amazing beauty and quality in both CBD and THC varieties."

Gordon says her journey building Moon Made Farms is ultimately an expression of her commitment to healthy living. Even before she moved from San Francisco, she had a keen interest in nutrition, exercise and pursuing a more healthful lifestyle. On the farm, that natural tendency could fully express itself. Now integral to her persona, that commitment is expressed in the therapeutic benefits of sungrown cannabis, which Gordon compares to the qualities of organic produce or grass-fed beef. In concert with full-spectrum sunlight, clean water and fresh air, Gordon cultivates healthy plants and clean medicine.

"We want to bring people something that's pure, that's healthy, that's grown to the highest

"THE QUESTIONS I WANT CONSUMERS TO ASK ARE, 'WHERE IS THIS CANNABIS FROM?' 'WHO GREW THIS?' 'HOW DID THEY GROW IT?' AND, TO GET VISIBILITY INTO THE SOURCE."

-TINA GORDON

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Above: Tina Gordon, Founder of Moon Made Farms

standards, and that's truly an expression of this place, because we want to make people's lives better," Gordon said.

SUSTAINABLE CANNABIS

Looking ahead, Gordon says that supporting farmers who use sun-grown, regenerative practices will not only result in clean cannabis, but also a healthier planet. With climate change bringing ever intensifying fires, floods, and other global catastrophes, farms that nurture our ecosystem rather than exploit it will take on new significance. Gordon envisions a polyculture economy in which small farms produce medicine in addition to food and other agricultural products needed by local markets.

"This is what's going to support communities," Gordon said. "This

is what's going to provide the public with the best possible cannabis."

Growing healthy cannabis is only part of the picture. Cultivating a genuinely sustainable, healthy cannabis economy depends on a community of individuals and families willing to invest in their health as well as the well-being of the environment. Key to that investment, Gordon says, is a marketplace of buyers who educate themselves on the origins of their herb.

"The questions I want consumers to ask are, 'Where is this cannabis from?' 'Who grew this?' 'How did they grow it?'" she said. "And, to get visibility into the source."

With that transparency, all members of the supply chain, from seed producer to end user, can be empowered to cultivate a healthier planet for all. ✨



A framed photo of former property owner Joani Hannan, a drummer who paved the way for queer artists in the '50s and '60s.





CALM

CRUISE

CREATE

CONNECT

A romantic couple is shown in profile, facing each other. The woman on the left has long, wavy blonde hair and is wearing a dark red, backless dress with a matching sash. The man on the right is partially visible, wearing a dark shirt. They are set against a bright, sunlit background with lens flare effects.

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CHARGE

Meanwhile, in the South Pacific's
EMERALD TRIANGLE ...

*Puro, New Zealand's largest medical cannabis operator, is
about helping people — and the planet.* BY MELISSA REID





RUGGED ALPINE MOUNTAINS sweep down to thundering waves along the wild Kaikōura Coast in Marlborough, New Zealand. Standing in a field high above the southern Pacific Ocean shoreline, I inhale deeply; the sweetly pungent aroma of sungrown cannabis plants and crisp ocean air surrounds me. An overwhelming sense of déjà vu suddenly hits me — it's as if I've been here before.

I'm on assignment visiting Kēkerengū, the grow operation for Puro, New Zealand's largest licensed medical cannabis cultivation company. Founded in 2018, Puro is part of an exclusive international group of large-scale commercial growers using organic methods of cultivation. Tiffany Tompkins from Organics Aotearoa New Zealand (OANZ) is also on the tour. As Deputy Chair, her mission, she says, is to help OANZ members, including Puro, collaboratively work for organic policies that benefit the health of New Zealand's people, communities, environment and economy.

Winston Macfarlane, site manager at Puro, explains that Kēkerengū is almost the exact distance from the equator to Humboldt County, but along southern latitude lines. Therefore, that same terroir that makes the Emerald Triangle grow some of the world's best cannabis can also be found here.

Kēkerengū has been home to Macfarlane's family for more than 130 years. Winston and his older brother Sank Macfarlane, who's also on Puro's leadership team, are the sixth generation to farm the 1000-hectare property. Implementing sustainable grow practices, they're working to grow premium medical cannabis

that improves the health and well-being of people, along with the surrounding environment.

Puro's decision to grow under organic protocols has come from the company's core values, the younger Macfarlane says. "We're committed to growing and supplying premium cannabis products as sustainably and ethically as we can."

Overwhelming evidence shows that synthetic chemicals used in conventional agriculture pose adverse health risks to humans, as well as nasty side effects to the environment. Organic agriculture, on the other hand, works in partnership with nature — it nurtures the health of people and ecosystems. With an emphasis on clean water and creating soil vitality that's teeming with microscopic life, organic farming encourages the soil rhizosphere to flourish, rather than treating it as an inert monolayer.

As Macfarlane leads us across the farm toward the fields of cannabis, Tompkins can't hide her enthusiasm. "It's really exciting to see this brand-new medical cannabis industry emerging in New Zealand, and Puro is setting a new precedent for organic cultivation," she said.

It's late summer on the flat plateau at Kēkerengū, and the plants are thriving in their microenvironment. The grow offers high UV ratings and long sunshine hours, while the salty sea spray provides a natural anti-bacterial layer, helping to keep insect and pest numbers low.

Puro's Managing Director Tim Aldridge and Commercial Cultivation Lead Max Jablonski join us in the fields. We walk through the rows of fragrant bushes, inspecting the beauty and



“Our first recorded medicines were all plant-based and organically produced. Herbal medicines are now a powerful voice in the pharmaceutical portfolio, and cannabis has a strong role to play.”

- Tom Forrest



bounty of the flourishing pink-pistil plants, and Jablonski starts telling me about his life before New Zealand: He was working at Caliva, a vertically integrated cannabis company in California, where he focused on postharvest, cultivation and fertigation. Turns out we have a few mutual connections, and again, California doesn't seem all that far away.

“Kēkerengū provides perfect growing conditions, with a coastal microclimate that's ideal for medical cannabis production,” Aldridge said, adding that he and his team believe New Zealand has the potential to produce some of the best cannabis in the world. Cannabis grown under organic protocols in New Zealand has piqued international interest, and Puro is currently finalizing its first export orders. According to Aldridge, the government has been extremely helpful, especially the New Zealand Trade and Enterprise.



Left: Guy Randall (Research and Development Manager) assists with Puro's first commercial outdoor harvest.



“It’s really exciting to see this brand-new medical cannabis industry emerging in New Zealand, and Puro is setting a new precedent for organic cultivation.”

-Tiffany Tompkins

Aldridge also reveals that Puro’s Cultivation Director, Tom Forrest, is leading a research and breeding program with geneticist Dr. Anna Campbell from AbacusBio, a world-class genetics company. Using a scientifically driven quantitative breeding program, the two are developing a seed bank of consistent medical cultivars that are adaptable to organic cultivation methods, alongside traditionally important traits such as yield and potency.

A Churchill Fellow for Cannabis Agronomy, Forrest has spent time at more than 50 cannabis cultivation facilities across eight countries, examining differing approaches and optimal methods for growing

cannabis. Under his leadership, Puro has been awarded an “In Conversion” organic certification.

“After informal experiments with various living soil methodologies and forays into the world of permaculture, it became very evident that organic cultivation is a necessary part of our future,” Forrest later tells me on the phone after my visit. “Although it’s still somewhat anecdotal evidence, we’re confident that biological, natural and organic cultivation methods will encourage healthier growth with more desirable secondary metabolite production — higher concentrations of terpenes, flavonoids and cannabinoids.”

Raised in a conventional farming family, Forrest says he’s always wanted to challenge traditional modern agriculture and find a more progressive means of cultivating healthy food and medicine.

“Natural products have been intertwined with pharmaceutical practice since the dawn of mankind,” he said. “Our first recorded medicines were all plant-based and organically produced. Herbal medicines are now a powerful voice in the pharmaceutical portfolio, and cannabis has a strong role to play.”

We agree about the sheer beauty of the outdoor cultivation site at Kēkerengū, and we discuss Puro’s overarching plans to improve the land, soil and environment while contributing to a healthier future for both plants and people. Forrest believes the relationship between organic cannabis and the local environment, the benefits for the farm and farmers, and the influence of terroir on cannabis expression are all strong arguments for organic cannabis.

“Organic and sustainable medical cannabis cultivation are two of our core values,” Forrest said. “We aim to improve the land, soil and environment of our growing locations and contribute to a healthier future.” ✨

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NEW YORK CITY: THE NEW CANNABIS HQ

Legalization in the Empire State means a tsunami of opportunities and a game-changing, tectonic shift in the industry. BY CHRIS ROBERTS

IT WAS PLEASURE AND not business that drew Berner, the cofounder and public image of Cookies, arguably the most visible consumer brand in American cannabis, to touch down in New York City for a ten-day vacation in late August.

Cannabis has been legal in the nation's largest city since March. New York's allowance for outdoor and public cannabis consumption wherever tobacco smoking is allowed — a right still not afforded in California, Colorado, and everywhere else the legal marijuana industry is firmly established — means that the former worldwide capital of marijuana arrests, where stop-and-frisk sent thousands of young men of color into the criminal justice system and made smoking a blunt outside a risky activity for everyone, is now a fine place to smoke weed and catch vibes.

And though New York's estimated \$5.7 billion annual appetite for cannabis has shifted investor and entrepreneur attention East — where the untold thousands of growers and players in the illicit market have

grown increasingly bolder as they navigate their place post-legalization — for Berner at least, this was meant to be a “no deals allowed” type of trip.

“Really, I went there to get high and eat good food,” he said. Fair enough, but somehow, business inevitably followed. Or rather, business was everywhere he went.

Driving through Midtown Manhattan, he saw cannabis sold out of halal carts plastered with names lifted straight from the Cookies Fam product line. In Brooklyn, the street hustlers were hyping straight gas, packaged in Cookies bags. Whether what he witnessed were bootleg knockoffs or the genuine item smuggled in from out of state remains unclear. Either way, “I found it flattering,” he said.

NEW YORK STORIES

One day, he set up shop in Greenwich Village's Washington Square Park where he brought 12 joints and some takeout sushi to smoke and people-watch. Known as the city's traditional outdoor marijuana

marketplace and frequent stage for standoffs with police in the past, the park was filled with a reception line of weed sellers, weed aficionados and curious park dwellers, all strolling up to say hello, chop it up and compare strains.

“I had the best fucking time I've had in years,” said Berner, who rewarded the park crew with a care package of a stack of pizzas and piles of VIBES rolling papers, one of his product lines. “I'd say my favorite people to get high with are New Yorkers.”

That endorsement portends a market shift: The cannabis industry's favorite people to sell cannabis to, and partner with, are now New Yorkers. Who would have thought that was possible?

For years a West Coast thing, legal cannabis is now a national game. But until federal legalization — and with it, the all-important interstate commerce component — the market is all about dominance in individual states. And with New York's cannabis market worth nearly \$6 billion, and with some 66 million annual visitors to New





York City alone during non-pandemic years, no greater prize exists in the U.S. larger than the Empire State.

This logic dictates that any cannabis brand with national or global ambitions needs a foothold in New York. And so Berner's Manhattan vacation became a de-facto scouting mission, the same pilgrimage that other investors and entrepreneurs in the cannabis space also undertook in the second half of 2021.

Because if a brand can make it in New York, they can make it anywhere — even outside the U.S. It sounds cringe, but it's true: Legalization in New York, the home of the United Nations, where a community of people from every nation and creed on the planet can be found, means legalization everywhere else on Earth is possible. It's a global race now, and the Big Apple is the logical headquarters — for Cookies and for everyone else.

"Hell, yeah, I want to be in New York!," Berner says happily, confirming the summer's worst-kept real-estate secret: Cookies is coming to town, and they want it all.

"We're just looking for the right opportunity. We want to have the best quality flower possible, and we have to have a legendary storefront. It has to be designed differently from any other store we have. I want to do the hiring myself, and I want to find the dopest, coolest people to represent us in New York."

To add the cherry on top of the pro-

billion-dollar, publicly traded multi-state operators (MSOs) who hold most of New York's medical-marijuana licenses and are all but certain to be first in line to start selling adult-use cannabis.

As of late September, the state had yet to issue final regulations, in part due to former Gov. Andrew Cuomo's hesitation to fill necessary regulatory committees. New Gov.

"CANNABIS COMING TO NEW YORK IS SOMETHING THE MOVEMENT AND THE INDUSTRY HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING COMPARABLE TO YET."

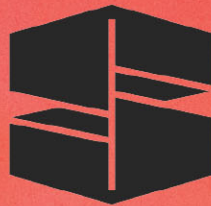
verbial NYC cheesecake, Berner says, "I'm fired up about the New York market opportunity. It reminds me a lot of Cali in the early 2000s." Cover up your ears, California: That one's going to leave a mark.

Exactly what final form that opportunity will take remains to be seen. There's speculation around whether the barrier for entry will allow the state's vast traditional market to compete with the country's existing

Kathy Hochul appears intent on making up for lost time by appointing Chris Alexander, a former drug-policy reform attorney, as executive director of the New York State Office of Cannabis Management.

WEED LOVES NY

New York has also received near-universal acclaim for what's considered the most progressive, consumer-friendly legalization



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scheme in the U.S., with ambitious promises that its “social equity” program — with grants funded in part by cannabis sales taxes — will create opportunities for small entrepreneurs and BIPOC people that haven’t materialized in other states, where the cannabis industry is still mostly controlled by white people.

Only time will tell if New York’s permit fees and zoning rules will be amenable to wide-open competition or protect the big boy’s market share. The deluge of interest is so intense that it may not be premature to declare New York City the current-and-next capital of the U.S. cannabis industry. Sorry, L.A., Denver, who?

“I’ve definitely noticed some of the larger West Coast brands looking to do stuff in New York,” said Matte Namer, a Manhattan native and real-estate developer who founded Cannabeta Realty, a real-estate brokerage focused specifically on the cannabis space. “Retailers, especially, appear eager to have a brand presence in New York City. I’ve been saying this for a while now, but cannabis coming to New York is something the movement and the industry haven’t seen anything comparable to yet.”

“Of course they all want to be in the New York market,” said Brooklyn-born Christine Ianuzzi, an event planner who founded the Cannabis World Congress and Business Exposition, a successful New York City-based trade show. “All eyes are on New York right now, because it’s New York.”

For now, New York’s appealing “early 2000s California” vibe means a sort of limited open season that’s so far encouraged underground entrepreneurs to become emboldened. There’s PizzaPusha, which has a minimum of at least \$120 for orders of medicated pizza, outgrowing a repurposed pizzeria in Gotham’s fabled Lower East Side to host massive outdoor events on Coney Island, all openly promoted on social media. Legendary hustlers like Branson are pursuing deals with movers like Berner, as mainstream moguls like Jay-Z slide into the space with his Monogram brand.



“People are way more open about what they’re doing; they’re being way more brazen about it,” says Mike Barreno, a Bronx native who co-founded Spleef, a monthly cannabis event series that launched in a very hush-hush manner way back in 2018. These days, “You see pop-ups all over. There’s one every week — people aren’t scared anymore.”

This is due in part to the realization that this post-legalization, pre-regulation era may have an expiration date. What’s working now — private events, bicycle delivery, buying pot out of a halal cart — might not work as early as summer 2022.

“No one seems to have the exact formula yet,” Barreno said, adding that most entrepreneurs he knows with one foot still in the traditional market seem to want a cannabis lounge. Some are trying to partner with out-of-state players like Berner; others are okay working with an MSO, and even others just want it all. In a place like New York City, the proverbial Center of the Universe, all of the above should work. In Barreno’s case, he’s considering it all: a brunch series at a Chelsea restaurant, a lounge, and even a cannabis-friendly jiu-jitsu tournament.

“No one should be salty,” Barreno said. “There should be enough for everyone to do their own thing.”✱



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THE GROUNDING DUO

In Lauren Mooney's hands, Reiki and cannabis are a perfect match.

BY SARA PAYAN

CANNABIS USE can of course heighten your senses and create space for grounding. Some also use it as a tool for connecting with the universal energy that runs through all living things. As cannabis use becomes more accepted, the herb is finding a new home with other alternative holistic therapies. One of these is Reiki, an energy healing practice known for promoting relaxation, clarity and behaving as a complementary therapy for pain, anxiety and mood.

Lauren Mooney is a New York City based Reiki practitioner who personally uses cannabis and combines her practice with the plant's powers. In fact, just recently she taught a Reiki I training course in Los Angeles, where we caught up with her for a fascinating chat.

HI, LAUREN. WOULD YOU GIVE OUR READERS A QUICK DESCRIPTION OF WHAT REIKI IS?

Sure! It's a Japanese healing modality. In its most basic form, it's energy healing that has a hands-on aspect to it. Reiki itself is a philosophy. The hands-on healing is such a huge component of it, and a lot of people do it where their hands aren't completely on you — they're feeling your auric field, the energy that surrounds us and the energy that we emanate, and everything is made of energy. The way I describe Reiki is that it's as if a bunch of radio stations were playing at the same time and then you tune into your own frequency. I believe

that's also true with cannabis because it's about bringing things into balance, and that balance can really help with so many things. We're careful in Reiki to not make claims about what Reiki can do because it's very different for everyone.

Another beautiful aspect of Reiki is its simplicity, and that's what actually makes it challenging to teach because it's not so much an intellectual thing you learn, it really mostly is experiential. And that also takes me back to cannabis because, like Reiki, cannabis' benefits are changeable depending on the person. You can't necessarily make claims like, "Oh, because this strain helped me with my anxiety, it's going to help my friend with their anxiety." I like to say Reiki has its own intelligence, and Reiki knows where you need it.

I helped my mom, who has since passed away, with in-person Reiki. I was about to start doing volunteer meditation and Reiki groups for Gilda's Club, a cancer support center in New York City right before the pandemic hit, so that started out as virtual, and continues to this day.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY WITH CANNABIS: WHAT GOT YOU INTO IT PERSONALLY, AND WHY DID YOU INCORPORATE IT INTO YOUR PRACTICE?

Originally from California, I started smoking recreationally in high school and that was my relationship with cannabis for maybe a decade.

The recreational dispensaries opened right around the same time that I was getting my mom into using cannabis to help with all the stuff she was going through with her Stage IV melanoma — she had brain tumors and multiple surgeries surrounding that. It was powerful to watch my mom; her leg would be shaking and then I'd give her some CBD tincture and it would literally stop. CBD was getting more popular, so I was already thinking about integrating it topically into my practice. I really think it helps people get into their bodies and slow things down.

A LOT OF PEOPLE LOOK AT CANNABIS AS A VEHICLE TO HELP GROUND THEMSELVES. CAN THE SAME BE SAID ABOUT REIKI?

I'd say Reiki helps you feel more grounded and slows you down, and that, in turn, can help you with so many different things. I've helped people who have had cancer, and it eased some of the anxiety, some of the pain, because slowing down and feeling a bit more grounded really helps with all of that. Being out of our bodies isn't something that's unique to having something as extreme as cancer. Being out of our bodies is a symptom of the time, of this virtual insanity that we live in, and obviously the pandemic. I think so many people are basically living out of their bodies and not realizing that they are. ✨

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GETTING HIGH IN BIG SKY

Dangle Supply Company, in Montana's coolest town, is cannabis' first outdoor recreation retailer.

BY ETHAN A. STEWART

THE CULTURE is shifting. You can feel it.

As legalization takes root in more and more places, the full measure of what we mean when we say “cannabis culture” is beginning to reveal itself in some truly beautiful and surprising ways. It’s here — in a place beyond close-up pictures of trichomes, impossibly high THC levels and dab rigs — that you’ll find Dangle Supply Company, the industry’s first company committed exclusively to the timeless joys of consuming cannabis in the Great Outdoors.

Based in southwest Montana, in the buzzy and adventure-minded community of Bozeman, Dangle is getting quite the good rep simply by making great outdoor gear and having plenty of fun along the way.

“Grown-ups want nice, well-designed things that will last,” says Adam Sklar, Dangle Supply Company’s co-founder. “And grown-ups also like to laugh. No one’s more surprised than us that we’re having success. It was a total accident to end up here.”

Indeed, the origin story behind Dangle

is a bit hazy. Started by a couple of bicycle nerds as a private joke back in 2018, Dangle is now a full-blown brand with a line of elegant titanium bongs and pipes purposefully built for adventure. With stockists all over the world, collabs with fashion and beer companies of international renown and a formidable social media presence that’s the absolute apex of laugh-out-loud, PG-13 stoner humor, Dangle’s success is no accident.

If their website and various media channels are to be believed, the company was actually started in 1969 by “Mr. Dan Gullbongs,” a passionate cyclo-tour enthusiast who happened upon a rogue set of metallurgist monks in the Swiss Alps back in the mid-20th century. It was there that Dan learned the dark arts of making titanium tubes, a skill that he quickly parlayed into making water pipes that fit his preferred lifestyle of casual cruising, bicycles, car camping and nature. As the story goes, Dan then turned the company over to his son, one “Danny Gullbongs,” a boy with a natural-born penchant for business. And Dangle Supply was born

— a company that lives and thrives at the intersection of weed and having fun in nature.

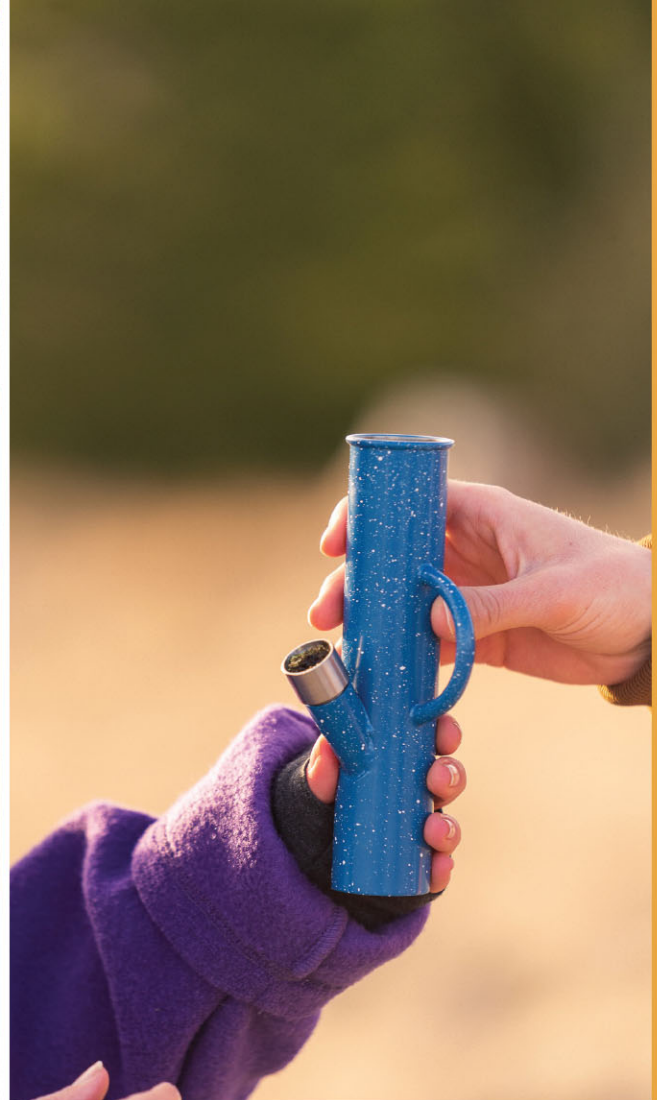
But “Danny” is actually Adam, a professional bike builder and longtime titanium wizard. And “Danny Jr.,” another main character in the Dangle backstory courtesy of their in-house myth making, is Colin Frazer, a fellow co-founder, artist and graphic design professor at the California Institute of the Arts. In truth, the duo started Dangle as a tongue-in-cheek commentary on the exploding popularity of bike-packing (going camping via bicycle) and the tradition of clipping gear to yourself or your bike frame (dangling).

“Adam made ten bongs at first [as part of the joke] and we figured we’d have a good laugh giving them away to friends,” Frazer says. “Like, this is the most ridiculous thing you could dangle type of joke. But we actually sold them, so we made 100 more. And we sold those out in a day. It sort of took off by itself from there.”

But the success isn’t just an internet fluke. Certainly, Sklar and Frazer stumbled upon a gaping hole in the market where



Taylor "Ty" Wallace inspects one of Dangle's titanium products.



cannabis consumers and outdoor recreation meet. In fact, they say that Dangle is primarily an outdoor company, one that reflects the new realities of cannabis culture in an increasingly legal landscape. There's also the fact that they just make great stuff. Have a session with their "Big Ripper" or toss fully loaded "Lettuce Wrap" in your bag for a day in the backcountry and it quickly becomes clear that Dangle is much more than a well-executed joke; it's form and function balanced with a designer's eye and a cannabis lover's mind. Bomb-proof elegance that gets the job done and keeps it mellow along the way.

And then there's Ty, the face of Dangle. According to his email signature, Ty Baunghs is the company's official Operations Manager. But, he's also their spirit animal.

Besppectated in large lens, thick-rimmed glasses and blessed with a dark and eye-catching beard, Baunghs is the long haired, soft spoken, jeans-and-boots wearing, humble hero of Dangle's imagined universe. He goes fly fishing and catches himself dressed as a bong-smoking wild salmon. He strips to his undies and paints himself green before taking a toke in the forest on Earth Day. He makes PSAs for safety during fire season and tirelessly

"GROWN-UPS WANT NICE, WELL-DESIGNED THINGS THAT WILL LAST. AND GROWN-UPS ALSO LIKE TO LAUGH. NO ONE'S MORE SURPRISED THAN US THAT WE'RE HAVING SUCCESS. IT WAS A TOTAL ACCIDENT TO END UP HERE." -Adam Sklar

heads up quality control on the bong and pipe divisions.

In actuality, Ty is Taylor Wallace, a Texas-born Renaissance dude Adam and Colin brought on board just as their "little joke" started to grow. Wallace, who runs the beloved Partner Coffee in Bozeman out of the back of a late model Ford Bronco, is a man of many talents. Almost immediately, Wallace helped Dangle streamline its customer support, bring all the company's order fulfillment in-house and enhance Dangle's storytelling antics. It was only a matter of time before "Ty" started scheming with "Dan" and "Danny" about how to best showcase the laid back and happy cannabis vibes that are at the very heart of Dangle Supply Company.

"It's about being able to casually enjoy something," Ty says about Dangle's appeal. "For me, that's a bong rip on a Sunday morning and then into the garage to rebuild my car's carburetor. I think a lot of people are attracted to that type of energy." ✨



The Unbreakable Bong

EVER WISHED YOU COULD hook a bong to your carabiner while backpacking through the great outdoors? Well, Dangle Supply Co. is ready to make your next adventure more cannabis friendly.

Created by outdoorsy types for outdoorsy types, Dangle crafted the perfect indestructible bong to take on the trail. Weighing just 133 grams and clocking in at seven inches tall, the DangleBong Titanium Water Pipe is as easy to carry as it is to use. Simply fill the sleek chamber with water, attach the included 18mm UltraSucc titanium bowl piece filled with the strain of your choosing, and take a hit. Made from elemental, medical-grade titanium and equipped with extra percolation holes, the UltraSucc bowl delivers a super smooth pull every single time. Or if dabbing is more your style, swap the bowl out for your favorite compatible 18mm nail. Also included is one RubbPlugg silicone cap, which stops water spillage when you're on the move.

From camping and backpacking to cycling, jogging or kayaking, Dangle's unbreakable, non-reactive titanium pipe is ready to go — no more stressing over fragile glass pipes. They come in a few different colors: the classic raw titanium, as well as blue and orange speckle. These bongs are dishwasher safe, better for the environment, and they can be passed down for generations. Right up there with the head lamp, portable stove and sleeping pad, this trusty pipe will likely be added to your list of essentials when packing for your next outdoor excursion. —*Gracie Malley*

DangleBong Titanium Water Pipe | \$169.42

The **COLOR** of **MONEY**



Kingston Royal Founder Ron Brandon demands shelf space for social equity brands. BY KAY SMYTHE

BUSINESS-BASED RACIAL INEQUALITY in this country is far from the distant memory it should be at this point in our social development.

Legalization isn't necessarily changing the demographics of people involved in corporate cannabis; the industry is still made up of predominantly white, middle-aged men who are the gatekeepers to inclusion. There are many examples of bias from cannabis stakeholders, which prevent post-legalization dreams of a cannabis utopia from being truly realized. No one knows this better than Ron Brandon.

"It's gangster, but it's clean. 'I thought it'd be more trappy.' I've heard it all," Brandon said, alluding to the type of ignorance and prejudice many experts face when entering the regulated cannabis market.

Impeccably dressed and frustratingly chivalrous, Brandon returns a knowing smirk. We're sitting at a cafe discussing how the lack of education in the cannabis industry poses challenges for those trying to enter the legal marketplace. Brandon has big plans for the future of cannabis.

While he's not yet a household name, Brandon is on his way. For more than a decade-and-a-half, he's worked with at least 20 cannabis companies in an industry that is in many respects new, but also inherently old. He has partnered with the likes of Ball Family Farms and Headstash, bringing high-quality cannabis to the legal market directly from the people who created this corporate landscape before the governance caught up. Most are members of California's Social Equity Program (SEP), which launched in 2018 with the passing of Senate Bill 1294, the Cannabis Collaboration and Inclusion Act.

Designed to repair the impacts of prohibition and the War on Drugs, the program offers a greater degree of government support as individuals with past cannabis convictions or arrests, or those who live in disproportionately impacted areas, attempt to start their legal cannabis businesses. The brainchild of a liberal playbook, the program's priority access to applications and help in this journey rarely occur the way they're pitched on city websites. Although cannabis.LACity.org details the technical and business assistance offered through the program, many believe it to be a complex process.

Over the past year, the myriad problems facing social equity applicants have come to a head.

"People run out of resources in a system that's very difficult to navigate," Brandon said. "Launching a social equity enterprise is so much more than qualifying for assistance. A serious barrier to entry is that cities grant licenses based on the organization already having a building lease, but so few of these applicants have the means of paying tens of thousands of dollars in rent on commercial space before finding out if they qualify to monetize their work."

Clearly frustrated by such overtly impractical hurdles, Brandon goes on to note that these issues are only exacerbated by so-called "technical experts" at the city-level who have little understanding of the industry — it's a case of the blind leading the blind.

"Legalization in California just hasn't worked like it was supposed to, and the SEPs aren't effective in mitigating the issues faced by the Black community in all areas of business," Brandon said, choosing his words carefully.

CHANGING COURSE

After a career as a professional football player spanning six years, Brandon retired in 2007 due to a knee injury. Soon after, he moved to Los Angeles to pursue a lifelong

passion for the arts. "I'd always been really into hand-sketching, but I missed my opportunity to follow that seriously," he says.

Brandon is the last person to admit that he's a multi-talented creative. He's more than dabbled in music, and he started finding real success just as the 2008 financial crisis hit. "I love getting involved in anything that pushes the message of nonconformity with what society is dealing with," Brandon said. "The failing economy disrupted my own existence, but because I was looking to connect cannabis and music, I started to supplement my income by brokering cannabis. Cannabis is used in music as a tool, and it was fulfilling to be on both sides of that journey."

As the Green Rush hit California, Brandon was presented with an opportunity to become involved in corporate cannabis. Motivated to represent diversity and maintain integrity of his cannabis work, Brandon moved from Los Angeles to San Francisco, where he entered cannabis politics. There, he co-founded the San Francisco Cannabis Licensing Group, a subchapter of the





“LEGALIZATION ISN’T NECESSARILY CHANGING THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN CORPORATE CANNABIS. THE INDUSTRY IS STILL MADE UP OF PREDOMINANTLY WHITE, MIDDLE-AGED MEN WHO ARE THE GATEKEEPERS TO INCLUSION.”

California Growers Association. He was instrumental in shaping the group’s policy to fall in favor of the operators rather than policy makers.

While Brandon remained committed to removing the stigma around cannabis, he kept hitting the same walls: time and money.

The slow growth of distribution for cannabis products was getting in Brandon’s way, so he hacked the system. Killing two birds with one stone, and avoiding the three-year wait for business licensing, Brandon’s new distribution company took SEP applicants to market in 30 days as brands. This gave them the clout and proof-of-concept to raise the same money as their non-SEP counterparts. The process also made the difference between a few million-dollar investment cap, to less than a \$100,000, streamlining the journey to licensing. As a point of purpose, Brandon built a sense of community in all the operations he partnered with, which

naturally led to the creation of his own flagship brand, Kingston Royal.

KINGSTON ROYAL’S LONG GAME

Kingston Royal was founded on a desire to enhance creativity through cannabis. Championing the notion that “you are the creator of all things,” the purpose driven cannabis and lifestyle brand aims to inspire. Kingston Royal isn’t going for an instant money grab like many other mainstream brands; they’re aiming for longevity by embracing cannabis’ roots while supporting originality, innovation and unrestricted thinking in their team.

“Mainstream brands started earlier because that’s the SoCal system; people who have money could get in early, but their top-down approach has made their businesses irrelevant in less than half a decade,” Brandon says.

Colloquially known as “Hollywood” brands, these products are quickly fading from dispensaries. Brandon attributes

their failure to a lack of understanding around the origins of cannabis, noting the exact pressure point these brands missed: the culture. Cannabis is no longer derived from Cheech and Chong stereotypes. The modern cannabis narrative is rooted in Black American history and the music that normalized consumption as a daily activity.

Brandon says that just as hip hop was birthed from backyards and community centers, so, too, was the shared experience of peace, relaxation and creativity from cannabis. America has the likes of Snoop Dogg and Dr. Dre to thank for the current state of legalization, but corporate brands and dispensaries ignore their forefathers at their own peril.

THE STRUGGLE IS REAL

This leads Brandon to the core component of social equity that’s ignored in the governance: Many dispensaries aren’t carrying enough social equity products.





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BRANDON SAYS THE LARGELY WHITE-OWNED DISPENSARIES DON'T WANT EDGIER ITEMS TAKING CENTER STAGE ON THEIR CAREFULLY CURATED SHELVES AND THAT THESE BIASES ARE BASED ON A COMMON MISCONCEPTION THAT WHITE-WASHING CANNABIS WILL DRAW NEW CUSTOMERS.

"There's supposed to be 20-25% of shelf space dedicated to SEPs. Dispensary owners aren't being held accountable," he said. While this isn't a law, dispensaries must dedicate 20-40% of shelf space to equity brands to qualify for Equity Trade Certification by OEG, the first federally recognized social equity certification program for cannabis and other goods.

According to Brandon, this is due to a concern over aesthetics, as well as the uphill battle to market that most social equity applicants are facing. He says the largely white-owned dispensaries don't want edgier items taking center stage on their carefully curated shelves and that these biases are based on a common misconception that white-washing cannabis will draw new customers.

And that couldn't be further from the truth. A new consumer is almost always introduced to cannabis through a friend or family member who partakes rather than seeking out products themselves. No question about it. The branding is important in a general sales way, but customer loyalty trumps the conversion metrics every time.

Most social equity products boast significant customer loyalty and could expand the market appeal of many dispensaries, but they're not given a seat at the table. This occurs while brands and

business owners cozy up to musicians, producers, rappers and artists who are far more closely aligned with the root of cannabis in America — a root defined by social equity applicants.

"Black social equity applicants make up the majority of influence of this industry, and we're asked to show up at the events, but there's always a guest list we miss when it comes to shelf space," Brandon said.

It's a bizarre picture that Brandon's painting: Social equity products and brands are more likely to be consumer-friendly in terms of cost, quality and consistency. Consequently, because these products are more aligned with the reality of the consumer, they're more likely to garner customer loyalty and drive sales. More than that, because of the macro psycho-social nature of cannabis use, SEPs are also more likely to be the first brand used by new consumers, and therefore generate longevity.

A true gentleman, Brandon doesn't dismiss his peers in any pointed fashion, but simply picks up on a consistent psychological failure of leadership.

"Hollywood brands may find it easier to get into retail space, get into parties," he said. "It's easier to duplicate, it's easier to grow, but when you can't maintain your consumers, and more importantly can't maintain your in-house talent, then you're a

pointless brand, and you're only in cannabis to look cool. If you're not looking to achieve anything else, you're going to fail. That's what we're seeing now."

When corporate businesses ignore the people who historically drove primo product from Canada to California — who grew in the hills of NorCal, and who sat in cells for smoking a joint — they seem to flounder and fade from sight. Put simply: People who never grew up in the real cannabis culture are trying and failing to make a profit, while the people who know cannabis best still largely sit inside of the American prison system.

Though the true metric likely won't be realized for a few decades, it appears that a key to longevity in cannabis is association with the traditional market and the people who brought cannabis to the forefront of our legal, adult-use activities.

"Success streams from developing brands and operations like your developing artists," Brandon says. "The mainstream industry is too busy trying to rethink cannabis."

WHAT NOW?

Brandon's next big undertaking in the cannabis industry as Chief Business Analyst at NatureTrak transcends his supply chain expertise. "A very close friend in tech asked if there was a play in cannabis, and it took until the passage of Prop 64 for us to pivot our concepts to focus on banking," Brandon said.

The first Black-owned FinTech SAS company, NatureTrak is changing the global business landscape by making it possible for cannabis businesses to operate with financial institutions. The tech company's free track-and-trace software can follow the complete lifecycle of a product — from seed to bank — giving banks an easy way to ensure their cannabis clients are legally compliant. Brandon is a consultant on the operations side, offering guidance on how the software speaks to social equity operators and the government.

"We help social equity operators get compliant banking so they can have some stake in the game," he said. "We really built the airplane in the air. Had it not been for my life-long history in this business, I'd never have understood the needs of all the key stakeholders."

With a finger on the pulse of change, Brandon is a true trailblazer. He understands the importance of cannabis' place in history while still being able to identify future opportunities and take advantage of the present moment.

"My personal belief is that it exists today, but it's not a promise it will exist tomorrow," said Brandon, speaking to the state of California's Social Equity Program. "We need to utilize funds while the government is being supportive. Let's get these people to the finish line."✱



Diamond Dust

KINGSTON ROYAL is taking its flower to the next level with the launch of VS1 Diamond Encrusted Cannabis. Using a proprietary process, it's the first of its kind to hit the cannabis market. THC diamonds are essentially nitro blasted into a powder form that's then encrusted onto the flower, resulting in high-THC sparkly buds, rich in flavor, aroma and strength.

While the VS1 has a similar look to Moon Rocks, there are some key differences, the main one being that the VS1 can pass the grinder test. Just like regular bud, VS1 breaks up smoothly and evenly and is extremely user-friendly. Consumers are gravitating to this new product, thanks to high THC levels (50%) that still maintain the integrity of the concentrate and the flower. "There isn't one element that overpowers the other," says Kingston Royal Founder Ron Brandon.

In other words, you get the high and original flavor from the extract, and you also get the flavor of the flower on the finish.

"Some users wanting to get crazy stoned will roll a whole joint with the VS1, while others will grind it up and pair it with another strain, such as French Laundry, to stretch it out or pump up the strength," Brandon said.

Because the THC diamonds retain original flavor and extract, Kingston Royal offers at least five different VS1 flavors, including Grape Soufflé, Purple Rosé, London Truffles and Dolce Limón. —*Maria Wylie*





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THE GIVING TREE: WOMEN FIRST

The Phoenix-based wellness center is smartly marketing its products — and goes after menopause. **BY BILL WEINBERG**

LILACH MAZOR POWER, owner of Giving Tree Dispensary in Phoenix, enthusiastically blurts out, “*Fuck menopause!*” as it goes to the core of the dispensary’s philosophy. “We’re helping the focus and mood of women who are going through menopause. It’s a celebration of being a rebel — that’s what we want women to experience.”

Moving to Arizona from her native Israel a decade and a half ago, Power’s interest in cannabis came about organically as her initial concern was providing an alternative model of healthcare just in time for the Grand Canyon State’s movement toward legalizing medical marijuana was taking root.

“My husband is an emergency room doctor, so I heard about a lot of chronic issues,” she says. “I wanted to offer a holistic approach for people who are looking for solutions, combining eastern and western traditions.”

Giving Tree opened in 2013, three years after Arizona passed its medical marijuana initiative, Proposition 203. Originally a “wellness center” — massage, reiki, yoga — the business also featured cannabis on its menu. But it wasn’t until 2017 that Giving Tree made the fateful decision to focus exclusively on cannabis. And what a game-changing move that proved to be.

To listen to Power talk about cannabis and its healing attributes is to understand that she’s someone who knows exactly what she’s talking about, not always a given in the industry. “I grew up in Israel, which was more open about cannabis than here [the U.S.],” Power says. “All of this relevant research

happened back in the 1960s; so, Israelis know all about the medical properties of cannabis.”

Giving Tree Dispensary is a vertically integrated operation with indoor cultivation and extraction taking place at another location about a mile away from the dispensary. “We have nine flower rooms, and harvest a room every single week,” Power says. “Production comes to 40 pounds per week.”

Giving Tree’s three product lines are currently available at several other dispensaries around Arizona as well as their own store, the first of which is Kindred Cannabis, a capsule CO₂-extracted oil offered in 11 varieties with 5, 10, 20 or 50 milligrams. All also come in daytime “Mind” or nighttime “Body” options and different ratios of THC and CBD and are available in 65 outlets across the state.

“Indica is an ingredient found in the nighttime [Body] option to help people sleep,” Power says. “The daytime is sativa that helps with energy and focus and enhances creativity throughout the day. Mind is a full-spectrum oil, not a distillate, so you get the full cannabinoid profile and all the terpenes that are in a sativa or indica plant.”

Katatonic, named for the company’s lab director Katarina Park, is another proprietary product line. A THCA isolate, this cannabinoid, Power says, produces “a very clear-headed high” and is available as Diamonds (THCA crystals), or Terps on the Rocks (THCA crystals with drops of terpenes). Also sold are THCA pre-rolls, flower from strains such as the popular indica-heavy Death Star sprinkled with THCA crystals.



The most recently launched product line, already garnering the most attention, is Revelry. Revelry was specifically created to help ease conditions associated with menopause, and it was developed with the company's marketing executive Stef Swiergol. A full-spectrum oil in a capsule with equal parts THC, CBD, CBN and CBG, the launch has been a certifiable hit. "We've found that Revelry can minimize hot flashes and help with anxiety and mood swings. Women describe it as 'putting your pink glasses on' and the world just looks a little bit better."

The revolutionary Revelry comes in a Day capsule, with equal portions of 2.5 milligrams each of the four constituent cannabinoids, and a Night capsule with 20 milligrams of THC and CBD combined. Power says reports indicate that Revelry also helps with sleep issues and is currently available in 17 stores throughout Arizona.

"As a woman-owned business, I always knew I wanted to make something that women would find inviting," Power says. "Our team goes through rigorous training to help people on their cannabis journey — we're not into the in-and-out, no customer service approach. We want to connect with our customers. I want my mom to be able to go into the store and not feel weird about it. I'm a mom, and I want to help women to be better moms without having to take pills or drink wine every night."

What about other product offerings Giving Tree is serving up to its customers? The dispensary is growing about ten strains, the most popular being Death Star, which is 1% CBD and 28% THC. Others are Golden Lemon, Granola Funk, White Widow, White Dream, and AC/DC. These are used for extractions as well as pre-rolls and flower.

When voters passed Proposition 207 last year, finally legalizing 21-and-over recreational cannabis use in Arizona, the game, once again, changed dramatically. Adults can now purchase up to one

"I GREW UP IN ISRAEL, WHICH WAS MORE OPEN ABOUT CANNABIS THAN THE U.S. ALL OF THIS RELEVANT RESEARCH HAPPENED BACK IN THE 1960S; SO, ISRAELIS KNOW ALL ABOUT THE MEDICAL PROPERTIES OF CANNABIS."

ounce of cannabis at a time, and the race is on for the state's dispensaries to compete for the multi-million-dollar recreational cannabis Arizona market. Giving Tree was ready.

"We got approval to switch to adult use at the end of January 2021, so we've been seeing anyone over the age of 21 since then," Power says. "Our business has now flipped to about 70% adult use and 30% medical."

Power also disclosed that Giving Tree has ambitions well beyond Arizona's borders and is already in a partnership with the Dorado dispensary chain in Puerto Rico, with two outlets in San Juan and two more about to open in Isabella and Aguadilla on the U.S. territory. Power says she got shares in Dorado for relaying her knowledge and expertise in the cannabis business prior to their launch on the beautiful Caribbean island.

And Giving Tree isn't quite done expanding. In fact, the dispensary's proposed next move may return Power to her native Israel as she's crafting a similar partnership to the one she has in Puerto Rico with a kibbutz near Tel Aviv, which, in turn, is hoping to jump in on Israel's burgeoning cannabis business. ✨



The 3 Biggest Culprits of **HEAVY METAL CONTAMINATION**



**And How To
Avoid Them Entirely**

Advanced Nutrients



If you've been growing cannabis for a while, you know the world of cultivation is progressing at warp speed. From genetics and plant physiology to the latest hardware innovations, it can feel like a full-time job just to keep up with the advancements.

And as legal cannabis continues to expand, there's one massive hurdle every veteran grower has to overcome. It all boils down to one word... Testing.

The reality is, new testing technology such as gas chromatography and mass spectroscopy has made it possible to test for contaminants deep in the tissue of plant material. And while you can avoid systemic pesticide and fungal contamination with clean genetics and

IPM practices, there's another insidious culprit threatening your plants—heavy metal contamination.

Maybe you've cultivated a dense canopy of huge, potent buds, only to learn that metals like arsenic, lead, mercury, or cadmium have rendered your plants unsellable. Or perhaps you've heard horror stories from other growers whose entire crop has been laid to waste—simply because they didn't stop toxins in their tracks when they had the chance.

To make it in today's market, avoiding heavy metals needs to be a top priority at all times. So keep reading to discover the three most common sources of contamination—and how you can avoid them.

Contamination Source 1: Grow Mediums

Make no mistake, a clean root zone is the foundation of a successful lab test. And contaminants have a way of sneaking into grow mediums, so it's crucial you do your due diligence before you start your next crop cycle.

Fair warning though: when it comes to toxins, not all grow mediums are created equal. And while issues can arise with any medium, it's especially important to double-check your source if you grow with coco coir.

See, everyone applauds coco for its renewable nature. But here's what many people don't realize: most coco coir is processed from coconuts found in the oceans off the coast of Southern India and Sri Lanka, where industrial waste pollutes the waters with dangerous contaminants. And due to the free market, it's all too

common for companies to source coco without testing it for toxins first. You'll do yourself a huge favor by following the chain of custody for the coco coir that makes it into your grow—and triple-checking that it's been sourced to ensure purity.

Now, coco coir is one thing. But that doesn't mean other grow mediums are always a safe bet, either. Take custom organic soil mixes, for example. When you source multiple materials from different locations, you have to remember those grounds can accumulate toxins and contaminants as well. Even rockwool can present issues depending on how it's sourced, especially when you start moving further down the supply chain.



Contamination Source 2: Grow Room Hardware

If you've been in the cultivation community for a while, you probably already know the price you'll pay by exposing your plants to cheap plastics. Earlier generations of grow tents saw thousands of plants die from plastics gassing off, because manufacturers opted for economical designs instead of considering the rigors of cultivation.

And as demand increases for inexpensive hardware options, low quality plastics and metals can often creep

into your grow room... Without you even realizing it. So it's crucial you insist on food-safe plastic in any situation where your plants may come into contact with the material.

In rare cases, stabilizers used in cheaply produced hoses—or the low-quality metal alloys used to make pump components—can also lead to contamination in your crop.



Source 3: Fertilizer

Many modern cannabis growers often cut corners based on the same economies of scale that apply to food production. There's just one big problem... Testing in the food industry ranges from less stringent to non-existent. And when it comes to cultivating safe cannabis, ensuring your fertilizer brand sources clean inputs is a non-negotiable for success.

"Many modern cannabis growers often cut corners..."

Many experienced growers feed their plants a strict diet of Advanced Nutrients for this very reason—they know superior inputs will lead to an easy testing process... And therefore, a profitable season.



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While nothing works as a silver bullet against heavy metals, you'll want to do everything in your power to ensure your plants test as pure, clean, and safe as possible.

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The bottom line is this: You can have the most potent buds on the market... But if your buds reveal any signs of heavy metal contamination, they'll never see the light of day.

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CANNA EDUCATION AT ITS FINEST

Oaksterdam University, the country's first cannabis college, is changing with the times.

BY RACHELLE GORDON

IT'S BEEN A QUARTER-CENTURY since California became the first state to legalize medical marijuana. Since then, cannabis has evolved significantly. The last decade in particular has seen a dramatic shift with regards to reform; most states have legalized the plant for either medicinal and/or adult use. In fact, the legal cannabis industry is now responsible for more than 300,000 full-time jobs in the U.S.

As the landscape changes and the stigma surrounding cannabis wanes, one thing remains clear: Access to high-quality cannabis education is critical for the industry to thrive. Oaksterdam University (OU), founded in Oakland in 2007, offers an authoritative and cutting-edge curriculum curated by industry pioneers. OU prides itself on setting the gold standard for cannabis academics.

"Our superpower is our students," says Dale Sky Jones, OU Executive Chancellor.

With deep roots in early advocacy efforts, the nation's first cannabis college has shaped a generation of professionals from legacy cultivators to up-and-coming operators. The school, with more than 50,000 alumni worldwide, has a network that includes top growers, entrepreneurs and policymakers.

And it's not just industry professionals who rely on OU to provide the latest cannabis knowledge. Regulators, researchers and government officials all look to the university to help frame tomorrow's legal marijuana marketplace.

THE BEGINNING

Oaksterdam University was initially formed as a way to strengthen California's medical cannabis community, back when the notion of adult-use was but a distant fantasy. Drug policy reform activist, Richard Lee, was inspired to establish the school after a visit to Cannabis College in Amsterdam and was so driven by his desire to legitimize the fledgling cannabis industry, he went forward with creating Oaksterdam University.

Jones, Oaksterdam's current Executive Chancellor, is an advocate in her own right. She fought alongside Dennis Peron on behalf of Prop 215, and she volunteered as an instructor when OU was first founded.

"Early on, Oaksterdam was entirely about the patients' safe medical cannabis access," Jones says. "Back then, it was learning about how to become a qualified patient; how to grow your own medicine; how to grow some extra medicine and share it with your collective; or how to potentially pay your mortgage that way."

Jones eventually made her way through the ranks, taking over as Executive Chancellor in 2012 from Lee after the DEA raided the university along with the affiliated Oaksterdam Museum and Coffeeshop Blue Sky.

That same year, Colorado and Washington became the first two states to fully legalize adult-use cannabis. Other states soon followed, and it wasn't long before Oaksterdam was the premier destination for quality (and highly in-demand) cannabis education.



“WITH DEEP ROOTS IN EARLY ADVOCACY EFFORTS, THE NATION’S FIRST CANNABIS COLLEGE HAS SHAPED A GENERATION OF PROFESSIONALS FROM LEGACY CULTIVATORS TO UP-AND-COMING OPERATORS.”

Suddenly, it wasn’t just about teaching people how to grow a little extra medicine — an entire supply chain was being formed.

“The needs of who needed to understand this industry changed, and we’ve changed our curriculum over the years to meet those needs,” Jones said.

From benevolent caregivers just trying to avoid prosecution, to commercial facilities trying to remain compliant, Oaksterdam’s core mission of imparting accurate cannabis knowledge has never wavered, particularly now as the federal fight for legalization rages on.

“We’ve always started with a prerequisite of arming students with what they need to know to make sure that they don’t lose it all,” Jones says. “The most expensive mistake is the one you didn’t see coming when you didn’t understand your risk.”

THE WORK

Oaksterdam aims to offer a wide breadth of coursework designed to combine practical knowledge with academic research. Designed by leading industry entrepreneurs and thought leaders, OU’s curriculum changes in tandem with the marketplace. Whether it’s new discoveries in

lesser-known cannabinoids or a breakthrough in extraction, students receive the most relevant and up-to-date cannabis expertise available.

As the industry moves toward standardization, the need for institutions such as Oaksterdam is proving to be critical. In its infancy, the school provided a safe space to share early insights into cannabis horticulture and growing techniques. Practices that were at one time found only on message boards or in magazines could be explored in depth and shared with a wider audience in an authoritative yet approachable way. Today, the school covers a vast range of subjects touching every corner of the industry including politics and history, legal rights and responsibilities, research and science of cannabis and more.

Oaksterdam University has cemented a position as the foremost cannabis educational facility in the country. But at its core, it’s a school that puts people first.

“All the way through, we remind folks whose shoulders we stand on that this industry began as a movement — it was about helping patients first,” Jones says emphatically. “It was never about legalizing weed. It was about legalizing people.” ✱

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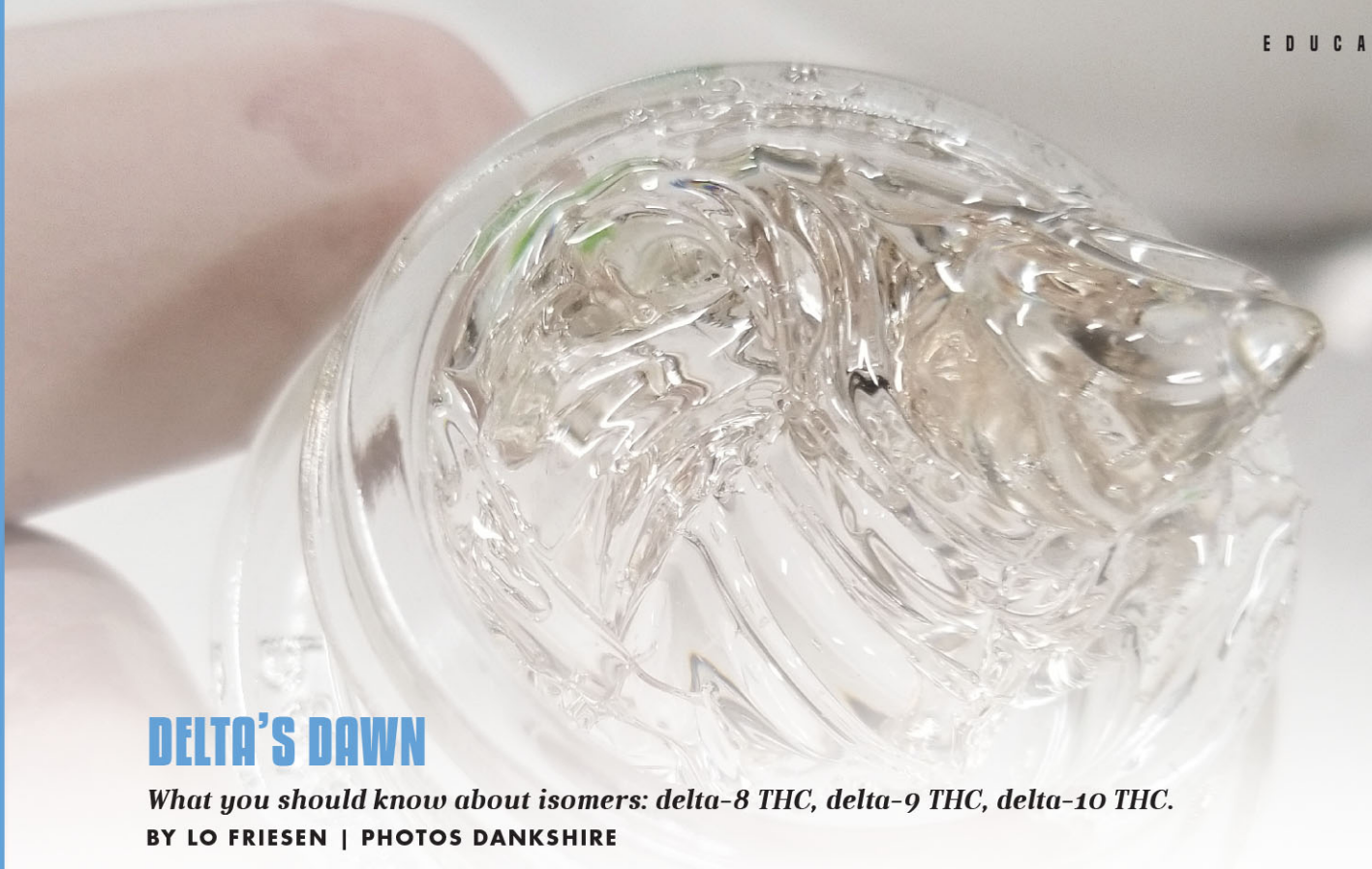
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DELTA'S DAWN

What you should know about isomers: delta-8 THC, delta-9 THC, delta-10 THC.

BY LO FRIESEN | PHOTOS DANKSHIRE

MOST PEOPLE over the age of 21 are familiar with the abbreviation “THC,” but odds are, many of them couldn’t tell you what it means or how it works. THC stands for tetrahydrocannabinol — it’s the compound in the cannabis plant that gives you that prototypical euphoric cannabis high.

The cannabis plant also produces THCA, short for tetrahydrocannabinolic-acid, in the arrangement known as delta-9 THCA. However, the THCA and THC molecules can be forced into other arrangements, called isomers. Delta-9 THC, delta-8 THC and delta-10 THC are all examples of such isomers. A tiny shift in atoms means the molecules all interact with the endocannabinoid system differently, consequently producing different mental and physical effects.

Delta-9 THC is mostly known for its euphoric and intoxicating qualities that lead to that classic cannabis high. Anecdotal reports clearly indicate that delta-9 THC provides consumers with a much stronger and longer lasting effect than its isomers, delta-8 and delta-10. Delta-8 has been reported to produce a slightly relaxing high that’s short-lived and delta-10 reportedly creates a slight intoxication, but mainly helps to boost energy. But there are potential dangers affiliated with all three delta isomers.

Increasingly, brands across the U.S. are highlighting the various THC isomers featured in their hemp-based products, giving way to increased press and ensuing questions from consumers. Since the passing of the Farm Bill in 2018, CBD and hemp-based products have grown exponentially within the country’s marketplaces. Touting the myriad benefits of hemp and CBD, these products can be found anywhere from Saks Fifth Avenue to the local gas station. The heightened media attention stems from the

surfacing of these unfamiliar isomers in hemp products — especially delta-8 THC. To date, hemp products have only included the cannabinoid cannabidiol (CBD), so the presence of THC isomers in hemp products has been extraordinarily controversial.

This leads us to the most logical of questions: How are these companies producing THC isomers from hemp?

CONVERTING MOLECULES

Delta-9 THC is a non-polar lipid, which is derived from the cannabis plant by way of delta-9-THCA. THC isomers can be naturally found in the cannabis plant; however, cannabis is bred genetically for the production of delta-9-THCA. This means that in order to reach high concentrations of THC isomers (as seen in many of the products entering the hemp market) a delta-9 THC or CBD molecule must undergo a process to convert the compound from delta-9 THC or CBD to delta-8 THC or delta-10 THC.

Basic chemistry, using chemical synthesis or temperature and pressure, can be applied to these molecules to manipulate one into the other. Chemical synthesis can yield much higher concentrations of these isomers at a much higher rate of efficiency than the plant naturally produces. So, hemp and CBD manufacturers are turning to chemical synthesis by using various solvents and acids to synthesize the production of these isomers for their products.

As media coverage sheds light on these processes, industry members, consumers and governmental agencies are becoming increasingly concerned. Their collective lack of understanding related to whether operators are equipped to properly handle these solvents and acids is at the root of all of the hullabaloo surrounding isomers.



Delta-8 extracted and processed in Washington state.

“DELTA-9 THC, DELTA-8 THC AND DELTA-10 THC ARE ALL EXAMPLES OF ISOMERS. A TINY SHIFT IN ATOMS MEANS THE MOLECULES ALL INTERACT WITH THE ENDOCANNABINOID SYSTEM DIFFERENTLY, CONSEQUENTLY PRODUCING DIFFERENT MENTAL AND PHYSICAL EFFECTS.”

An important step in producing consumer products is ensuring that there are no harmful chemicals in the end product prior to releasing the product to market. Can these manufacturers properly remove all residual solvents from the synthesized product? Are there harmful by-products being produced and remaining in the final product? Are these operators equipped to test for dangerous chemicals and byproducts?

Without regulation in the hemp and CBD market, manufacturers aren't required by anyone to test for these residual solvents. Consumer safety is of the utmost importance, everyone surely agrees, yet customers are left unaware of the potential risks involved with these unregulated products.

POTENTIAL RISKS

Risks of inhaling, ingesting or topically applying products with mid-high concentrations of solvents can result in irritation

of the lungs or skin. These risks are compounded by the fact that this chemical synthesis process has jeopardized the success of local, legal cannabis markets.

Investigations are underway as licensed manufacturers in regulated markets have stopped sourcing locally grown THC cannabis biomass and are instead sourcing hemp CBD extract from out-of-state or international sources and converting the CBD from hemp into delta-9 THC. Not only are consumers at risk, but the local regulated cannabis industry is also at risk. Because of this shift in purchasing, small business owners are losing customers, as they're unable to compete with hemp prices. Additionally, tax dollars that would otherwise be collected from the local suppliers aren't going to the states they should.

By harnessing the power of chemistry, companies such as Heylo, a Seattle-based licensed cannabis processor, are creating products that highlight the positive effects of THC isomers without utilizing solvents.

Heylo's cannabis oil, The New Workout Plan, has more than 20% delta-10 THC, which is produced from delta-9 THC dominant cannabis plant material, extracted through CO₂ extraction, and converted to delta-10 THC.

Some states and legal markets have quickly taken action to ensure delta-9 THC products are produced from legal and regulated sources. This will support the health of the legal medical and recreational markets, but only time will tell how the distribution of CBD and THC isomer products will be affected. Consumer safety is of the utmost importance as this industry is being built. I encourage everyone to be an informed industry member and consumer, and to find products you can trust. ✨

Lo Friesen is an environmental chemist, product developer and botanical extraction thought leader. She's the Founder/CEO of Heylo, a licensed cannabis processor in the state of Washington.





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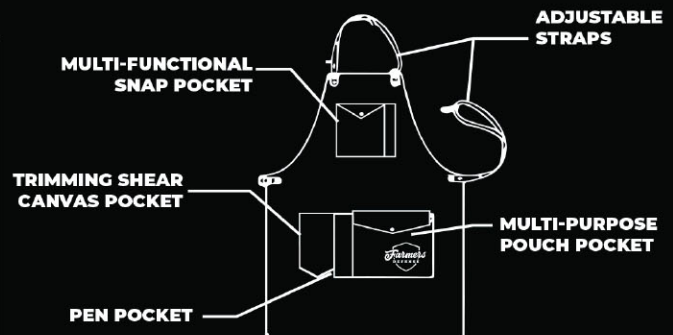

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THE NEW CHARDONNAY: THE UNLIKELY STORY OF HOW MARIJUANA WENT MAINSTREAM

In her engaging book, Heather Cabot argues cannabis is the great societal unifier. **BY MARIA WYLLIE**

IN “THE NEW CHARDONNAY,” award-winning journalist and former ABC News anchor Heather Cabot explores how cannabis shed its “reefer madness” stereotype and — seemingly overnight — moved into the homes of wine-sipping soccer moms looking to take the edge off when the clock hits five.

Cabot’s writing style is engaging and informative as she seamlessly weaves the stories of various cannabis entrepreneurs willing to risk it all to profit from the Green Rush. Three years in the making, Cabot travels all across the U.S. with a stop in Canada, accompanying these characters in person, taking note of their conversations and personalities, and ultimately what drives them to reach success. She brings the reader with her, giving us an inside look into their homes and offices, courtrooms, release parties and bigwig networking events.

We meet Beth Stavola of the Jersey Shore, a boss babe and mother of six deemed “the Queen of Marijuana;” Jeff Danzer, former fashion marketing executive turned high-end cannabis chef; Ted Chung and Tiffany Chin, Wharton grads and masterminds behind Snoop Dogg’s cannabis endeavors; Bruce Linton, founder of the world’s first publicly traded cannabis company; and Mel McDonald, a devout Mormon and former U.S. attorney during Reagan’s War on Drugs who changed his stance on cannabis after the plant saved his son’s life.

The cast of characters spans a range of socio-economic backgrounds, and their interests in cannabis all stem from different places. Cabot’s selection is no accident — their experiences give way to a larger narrative that shows how cannabis is changing lives for the better as it transitions from a taboo drug, to an alternative medicine, to a sophisticated option for winding down.

Along the way, Cabot educates readers on the path toward legalization, highlighting political and voter interests while



showcasing the complexities of implementing new infrastructure for both medical and recreational sales alongside the underground market.

A great introduction for the canna-curious, the book outlines common terms such as indica and sativa and explains how the plant interacts with the body’s endocannabinoid system. It also shares new, innovative consumption methods, such as vape pens, precisely dosed gummies, pressed tablets, infused beverages and gourmet edibles. It’s a whole new world for those wary consumers who may have hit the gravity bong too hard back in high school. More seasoned consumers should also find the novel a good refresher while learning about some of the most successful people in the industry.

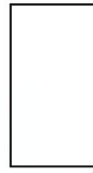
“The New Chardonnay” has a catchy title, and while it certainly offers insight into the continually growing cannabis customer base of women who are seeking alternative options for medicine and stress relief, at its core, this piece of investigative journalism is about the healing and unifying power of cannabis across all margins of society. It’s about how cannabis can change the world. ✨

FEATURED IN MENS JOURNAL

MUSCLE & JOINT CREAM

RED CHILI PEPPER

Capsicum creates a sensation of heat when used on the body and is used for temporary relief of muscle or joint pain.

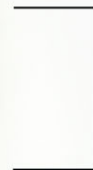
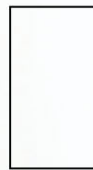


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PHOENIX FIZZ: THE ULTIMATE CANNA MOCKTAIL

Using Rick Simpson Oil-infused syrup is the game-changer you didn't know you needed.

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY JOANNA O'BOYLE

ALL IT TAKES is four steps. You're only four steps away from making a Rick Simpson Oil-infused syrup that you'll want to keep on hand to easily make cannabis beverages at home. No alcohol, no fuss, and you have total control over dosage and ingredients. Sounds pretty great, no?

RSO IN THE KITCHEN

If you're looking for a potent, relatively inexpensive, full-spectrum extract to incorporate in the kitchen, Rick Simpson Oil (RSO) is the perfect choice. It has a concentrated cannabis-flower taste that adds depth and bitterness to a drink or dish (it even boasts a floral sweetness, depending on the strain), with a powerful dosage that's convenient to work with when making therapeutic foods.

WHAT'S RSO?

Rick Simpson Oil/RSO is a super-concentrated cannabis oil that's also full spectrum, meaning it contains all of the cannabinoids, terpenes and flavonoids of the plant. It's made with a high-octane solvent, such as ethanol, then left unrefined beyond extraction, resulting in a high percentage of original chemical compounds and chlorophyll left in the final product.

Heat gently applied during the extraction process burns off the solvent and decarboxylates the cannabinoids, so the oil is ready to be applied as a potent topical or eaten as-is. The catch: It tastes

terrible. However, this actually makes it ideal for infusing foods that make the most of its fiercely bitter, herbal flavors, and allows for the creation of heavy-hitting edibles that fully maximize the entourage effect (the idea that the specific chemical compounds and oils found naturally in cannabis strains are amplified in strength when left together).

WHO'S RICK SIMPSON?

The eponymous creator and advocate of the dark, sticky cannabis oil recommends making the extract from your own plants, so you know precisely what has and hasn't gone into the final product. He first published his DIY recipe for Rick Simpson Oil — a name first coined by Jack Herer — on the internet in 2004. Simpson himself poetically calls the oil "Phoenix Tears" and has never patented his method, ensuring the information remains freely available to literally anyone who wants it.

For years, he made RSO personally from his home grow and gave it away for medicinal use, but a 2009 raid by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police put a full and final stop to that effort. He and his wife Danijela now live in Croatia, where they continue to be tremendous cannabis activists and educators, despite Simpson suffering a paralyzing stroke in 2018. They currently sell the authoritative books on RSO from their website and offer instructions on how to produce the oil.

Phoenix Fizz

INGREDIENTS

- 1-gram RSO*
- 1/8 tsp. Liquid Sunflower Lecithin** (found in health food stores or online; do not sub powder)
- 1 cup Sugar
- 2 cups Water
- Sparkling Water
- Ice

SUPPLIES

- Glass Stirrer/Rod
- Immersion or High-speed Blender
- Heavy-bottomed Saucepan

DOSAGE

Change the math to correlate to your specific percentages of THC or CBD in your RSO, but as an example: The average RSO contains about 60-80% THC per gram. So, if the gram of RSO used in this recipe had 60% THC, it would come out to 600mg THC in the final bottle of syrup. Divide that total by the number of servings (which in this case is 19), so 19 servings equal roughly 30mg per drink.

**Learn to make your own RSO at phoenixtears.ca/producing-the-oil*

***Liquid sunflower lecithin is the key to creating a stable suspension of oil in liquid/emulsification here, accept no substitutes.*

RSO-INFUSED SIMPLE SYRUP

1. Bring water to a boil in the saucepan.
2. Turn off heat and whisk sugar into the hot water until sugar is dissolved completely.
3. Let cool slightly, then carefully pour the syrup into a heat-tolerant container safe for blending with an immersion blender. If using a high-speed blender, pour into the blender pitcher.
4. Blend RSO and 1/8th tsp. of liquid sunflower lecithin into the hot syrup until most of the oil specks dissolve. If the oil specks remain stubborn, you can add it back to the saucepan and heat it slightly (the gentlest warmth and stirring should do the trick).
5. Once hot, it'll foam like crazy which means the sunflower lecithin is creating a stable suspension/emulsion.
6. Scrape down the oil that sticks to the sides of the container as you blend;
7. When most of the oil specks have dissipated, use the glass stirring rod to break up the foam.
8. Let the syrup cool fully. Label clearly as containing cannabis and at what dosage.

BIG FINISH

1. Put ice in a Collins or rocks glass.
2. Fill the glass with sparkling water.
3. Top with 1 oz. RSO-infused simple syrup.
4. Garnish and enjoy. ✨





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FRENCHY CANNOLI | 1956-2021

TRIBUTES FROM AROUND the world poured in almost immediately after Frenchy Cannoli, the master hash-maker, educator, electric personality and tireless advocate for the magic of cannabis, died July 18 at the age of 64.

Within days, a mural in France featured his signature grin. Within weeks, respectful obituaries ran in *The New York Times* and *The Economist* — strong signals that Frenchy, born Didier Camilleri in Nice, accomplished something remarkable for the plant, and the movement.

Frenchy recognized the immense value in tradition, a process that revolves around the continuous gifting of knowledge. He spent years learning thousand-year-old techniques of hand-crafted hashish-making. Then, while reintroducing this forgotten product to the modern marketplace, he also shared everything he knew about it, giving free lectures on YouTube and Instagram up to the week before he died. He recognized the fragile treasure that is the now famous Emerald Triangle cannabis growing-region, and he used his charisma to advocate for the California appellation project, which identifies and markets cannabis cultivars and their terroir like fine wine. —Chris Roberts

In the words of Frenchy, **"CANNABIS IS THE MOST INCREDIBLE PRODUCT IN THE ENTIRE PLANT KINGDOM. AND WE ARE LUCKY TO WORK WITH IT."**

To learn more about Frenchy's life, visit:
cannabisnow.com/frenchy

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